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ROMANCE

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The Tales of the New York Story Club

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Sample Copy of this Number sent on receipt of 15 cents.

A spirited account of a battle from the pen of a master of style—Prosper Mérimée, the distinguished French story-teller. This translation is from the *Strand Magazine.*

HOW THE REDOUBT WAS TAKEN.

A FRIEND of mine, a soldier, who died in Greece of fever some years since, described to me one day his first engagement. His story so impressed me that I wrote it down from memory. It was as follows:

I joined my regiment on September 4th. It was evening. I found the colonel in the camp. He received me rather brusquely, but having read the general's introductory letter he changed his manner, and addressed me courteously.

By him I was presented to my captain, who had just come in from reconnoitring. This captain, whose acquaintance I had scarcely time to make, was a tall, dark man, of harsh, repelling aspect. He had been a private soldier, and had won his cross and epaulettes upon the field of battle. His voice, which was hoarse and feeble, contrasted strangely with his gigantic stature. This voice of his he owed, as I was told, to a bullet which had passed completely through his body at the battle of Jena.

On learning that I had just come from college at Fontainebleau, he remarked, with a wry face: "My lieutenant died last night."

I understood what he implied—"It is for you to take his place, and you are good for nothing."

A sharp retort was on my tongue, but I restrained it.

The moon was rising behind the redoubt of Cheverino, which stood two cannon-shots from our encampment. The moon was large and red, as is common at her rising; but that night she seemed to me of extraordinary size. For an instant the redoubt stood out coal-black against the glittering disc. It resembled the cone of a volcano at the moment of eruption.

An old soldier, at whose side I found myself, observed the color of the moon.

"She is very red," he said. "It is a sign that it will cost us dear to win this wonderful redoubt."

I was always superstitious, and this piece of augury, coming at that moment, troubled me. I sought my couch, but could not sleep. I rose, and walked about awhile, watching the long line of fires upon the heights beyond the village of Cheverino.

When the sharp night air had thoroughly refreshed my blood I went back to the fire. I rolled my mantle round me, and I shut my eyes, trusting not to open them till daybreak. But sleep refused to visit me. Insensibly my thoughts grew doleful. I told myself that I had not a friend among the hundred thousand men who filled that plain. If I were wounded, I should be placed in hospital, in the hands of ignorant and careless surgeons. I called to mind what I had heard of operations. My heart beat violently, and I mechanically arranged, as a kind of rude cuirass, my handkerchief and pocket-book upon my breast. Then, overpowered with weariness, my eyes closed drowsily, only to open the next instant with a start at some new thought of horror.

Fatigue, however, at last gained the day. When the drums beat at daybreak I was fast asleep. We were drawn up in rank. The roll was called, then we stacked our arms, and everything announced that we should pass another uneventful day.

But about three o'clock an aide-de-camp arrived with orders. We were commanded to take arms.

Our sharp-shooters marched into the plain. We followed slowly, and in twenty minutes we saw the outposts of the Russians falling back and entering the redoubt. We had a battery of artillery on our right, another on our left, but both some distance in advance of us. They opened a sharp fire upon the enemy, who returned it briskly, and the redoubt of Cheverino was soon concealed by volumes of thick smoke. Our regiment was almost covered from the Russian's fire by a piece of rising ground. Their bullets (which besides were rarely aimed at us, for they preferred to fire upon our cannoneers) whistled over us, or at worst knocked up a shower of earth and stones.

Just as the order to advance was given, the captain

looked at me intently. I stroked my sprouting mustache with an air of unconcern; in truth, I was not frightened, and only dreaded lest I might be thought so. These passing bullets aided my heroic coolness, while my self-respect assured me that the danger was a real one, since I was veritably under fire. I was delighted at my self-possession, and already looked forward to the pleasure of describing in Parisian drawing-rooms the capture of the redoubt of Cheverino.

The colonel passed before our company. "Well," he said to me, "you are going to see warm work in your first action."

I gave a martial smile, and brushed my cuff, on which a bullet, which had struck the earth at thirty paces distant, had cast a little dust.

It appeared that the Russians had discovered that their bullets did no harm, for they replaced them by a fire of shells, which began to reach us in the hollows where we lay. One of these, in its explosion, knocked off my shako and killed a man beside me.

"I congratulate you," said the captain, as I picked up my shako. "You are safe now for the day."

I knew the military superstition which believes that the axiom *non bis in idem* is as applicable to the battle-field as to the courts of justice. I replaced my shako with a swagger.

"That's a rude way to make one raise one's hat," I said, as lightly as I could. And this wretched piece of wit was, in the circumstances, received as excellent.

"I compliment you," said the captain. "You will command a company to-night; for I shall not survive the day. Every time I have been wounded the officer below me has been touched by some spent ball; and," he added, in a lower tone, "all the names began with P."

I laughed sceptically; most people would have done the same; but most would also have been struck, as I was, by these prophetic words. But, conscript though I was, I felt that I could trust my thoughts to no one, and that it was my duty to seem always calm and bold.

At the end of half an hour the Russian fire had sensibly diminished. We left our cover to advance on the redoubt.

Our regiment was composed of three battalions. The second had to take the enemy in flank; the two others formed the storming party. I was in the third.

On issuing from behind the cover, we were received by several volleys, which did but little harm. The whistling of the balls amazed me. "But after all," I thought, "a battle is less terrible than I expected."

We advanced at a smart run, our musketeers in front.

All at once the Russians uttered three hurrahs—three distinct hurrahs—and then stood silent, without firing.

"I don't like that silence," said the captain. "It bodes no good."

I began to think our people were too eager. I could not help comparing, mentally, their shouts and clamor with the striking silence of the enemy.

We quickly reached the foot of the redoubt. The palisades were broken and the earthworks shattered by our balls. With a roar of "Vive l'Empereur!" our soldiers rushed across the ruins.

I raised my eyes. Never shall I forget the sight which met my view. The smoke had mostly lifted, and remained suspended, like a canopy, at twenty feet above the redoubt. Through a bluish mist could be perceived, behind their shattered parapet, the Russian Grenadiers, with rifles lifted, as motionless as statues. I can see them still—the left eye of every soldier glaring at us, the right hidden by his lifted gun. In an embrasure at a few feet distant, a man with a fuse stood by a cannon.

I shuddered. I believed that my last hour had come.

"Now for the dance to open!" cried the captain. These were the last words I heard him speak.

There came from the redoubt a roll of drums. I saw the muzzles lowered. I shut my eyes; I heard a most appalling crash of sound, to which succeeded groans and cries. Then I looked up, amazed to find myself still living. The redoubt was once more wrapped in smoke. I was surrounded by the dead and wounded. The captain was extended at my feet; a ball had carried off his head, and I was covered with his blood. Of all the company, only six men, except myself, remained erect.

This carnage was succeeded by a kind of stupor. The next instant the colonel, with his hat on his sword's

point, had scaled the parapet with a cry of "Vive l'Empereur!" The survivors followed him. All that succeeded is to me a kind of dream. We rushed into the redoubt, I know not how; we fought hand to hand in the midst of smoke so thick that no man could perceive his enemy. I found my sabre dripping blood; I heard a shout of "Victory;" and, in the clearing smoke, I saw the earthworks piled with dead and dying. The cannons were covered with a heap of corpses. About two hundred men in the French uniform were standing, without order, loading their muskets or wiping their bayonets. Eleven Russian prisoners were with them.

The colonel was lying, bathed in blood, upon a broken cannon. A group of soldiers crowded round him. I approached them.

"Who is the oldest captain?" he was asking of a sergeant.

The sergeant shrugged his shoulders most expressively.

"Who is the oldest lieutenant?"

"This gentleman, who came last night," replied the sergeant calmly.

The colonel smiled bitterly.

"Come, sir," he said to me, "you are now in chief command. Fortify the gorge of the redoubt at once with wagons, for the enemy is out in force. But General C—— is coming to support you."

"Colonel," I asked him, "are you badly wounded?"

"Pish, my dear fellow! The redoubt is taken!"

The story of a rough rider, a hard drinker, and a daring fighter. He never knew happiness, and he brought little but misery into the lives of those about him. This account of the stormy career of a Southern soldier was written for ROMANCE by W. H. Babcock.

THE PRINT OF A HORSE'S HOOF.

IT may be called his sign-manual. At least he left nothing else on earth with so much of himself in it. Dinted into hard flooring under more than one notable roof, it abides to this day in spite of all scouring—the savage seal of man and beast. Surely reckless hardihood and capricious wildness were never written more plainly.

Savage, I have said, yet that vehement, lavish, ungovernable, hard rider—"Iron" Cullen they called him—was a great favorite among men—and women—in his early days, and not the less that he had come early into a goodly inheritance. Almost from birth he had known himself as a personage not to be slighted. In all things he had his way; not unlike that of some uncertain but headlong stream from the roughly-wooded hill country above his Maryland home.

One of his plunges fairly took the breath of the community. He had darted off on a half-junketing trip to nowhere in particular—as was his occasional custom—and remained just long enough to be missed, when he suddenly reappeared—with a bride. The news went swiftly from house to house along the narrow roads between the white-oak woods and the fields of fat-leaved tobacco; it eddied about the round-arched doorways of the straggling county town, already nearing dotage; some echo may even have reached the half-grown city on the other side, not yet too large and national for interest in matters only fifteen miles away.

The net result of inquiry was not great. The county had another lady, veritable and stately, a lady who, like Lochinvar, had "come out of the west," and that was all. But Christian kindness and welcome are easily extended to one who sits at the head of a traditionally well-appointed table and who would be an ornament

to any society. In due time the local consciousness absorbed her, almost forgetting that she had had an earlier life. Indeed, her reticent, unimpassioned bearing went very well, as if from the beginning, with her antiquated conventional surroundings and half-manorial state. To those who felt that an alliance in their own set was compensation for almost anything, her choice seemed natural enough; but in wedlock compatibility of taste and temper ought surely to count a little, and so ought feminine affection. These were not obvious.

At first he showed himself warmly appreciative of the beauty which he had taken home so hurriedly, and she tried to be interested in his erratic pursuits; but the breach began and widened. His audacity and saliency, however they may once have touched her fancy, grew very crude and wearying when seen day by day without background or relief; while he, off and on, had fits of wondering what could have persuaded him to barter his freedom for primness and a pretty face. What ailed the woman? Was not her case better than in the old days? "Reduced?" Yes; but when reduced people are restored to their former status—and even lifted a little—do they owe no thanks, no consideration? Books, pictures, clothes, flowers, jewelry—she was welcome to supply herself; only let him have his whiskey and his fox-hunting, his cards and his races, in comfort, as a gentleman should. So there was more and more hard drinking, varied by other proceedings equally hard, until the bewildered lady sometimes wondered whether she had mated herself for life to a Bedouin sheik or a centaur.

On her first emphatic protest, she learned very directly his sentiments, and withdrew, in consternation and anger. Later, the thought came to her that there was justice in what he had said. Did she have a right to marry this man, mainly as an escape, and then demand sacrifices? True, orderliness and decent behavior ought not to be sacrifices to a gentleman; but of what use are "oughts" in dealing with a full-grown organism, with habits as permanent as its limbs? After much grievous thought and some tears she made up her mind to do better, especially to give him such a

greeting that very evening as would prove (to them both) that there was really love in her heart.

He came, but in a style to put even friendly converse out of the question—a fox-brush waving over his head, a frantic horse under him, a score of wild riders behind him. It was like some scene out of a stormy night on the Brocken. His companions pulled up uncertainly, seeing the lady; but Iron Cullen charged his own house as if it had been a hostile battery, and she fled before him with an irrepressible shriek. The declaration of independence had captured the dining-room. Where she sat, aghast, overhead, she could hear him clinking the glasses at the sideboard; then wheeling suddenly, he rode out again and away. When she crept down a tiptoe to note how far heathenism had gone, and to clear away the *débris*, it is no wonder that the poor lady felt as though a fiend had left his mark on her glossy floor.

But when her Arab reappeared she greeted him quietly. At supper she was conspicuously patient; during the early evening more and more pointed in considerate politeness. But at last, tired beyond endurance, she swept up-stairs, calm outwardly, though outraged and wrathful. She had heard of the humiliations of ill-used wives, but what could compare with being literally ridden over without apology? Was she proper game to be raced about like a fowl by a dog, and all quite as a matter of course? At any rate, it relieved her from trying any more. Who could be a fond wife to a howling and obdurate Comanche?

His mood was even less promising, for something had happened of which she knew nothing. During the day he had come face to face with a dashing dame, greatly admired by him, until a natural preference for a half-million in the city had carried her out of reach. The money was all her own now, and she was passing discreetly through the later stages of mourning, with no incumbrance except her new and easily-changeable name. A rattling, jolly, devil-daring girl she was even yet, and the best of company, as anybody could see. For beauty—why, the tulip and cardinal flower have that as well as the colorless magnolia; and they are well within human touch. He began to resent the

wifehood that stood in his way, not remembering how he had carried off the magnolia almost by main force while that fancy was on him, without waiting for sundry explanations which she tried hard to make.

After this, he spent much time where inclination led; while his wife, touched in pride, but with a sense of futility in anything that she could do, found other company, chiefly of her own sex. Not exclusively, though; for one day as Cullen rode down the hill behind the house, he saw the white flower of his metaphor listening with head erect (as such a flower should, if it listens at all) to one from the county town who seemed to be pleading something outside of the statute. Stiff hedges of box and other evergreens were about them in the hollow, the great mossy slant of the roof came nearly to the level of their heads, the immense chimneys rose at the corners to the full height of the ridge, old oaks and taller tulip trees embowered and overshadowed all

Iron Cullen was proud in his heart of this ancestral home, to which he had done little but evil; proud, also, of his stately wife, though often wishing to be rid of her. Probably it was this pride more than anything else—he had come within the hour from the widow—which made his brow darken as he looked at the pair below. Then he saw her turn away stiffly and quietly and enter the house, while the visitor mounted and rode off. After a moment's hesitation Iron Cullen followed his wife. He found her with signs of tears. "Ah!" he exclaimed significantly, seating himself, "I reckon it wouldn't take me long to ride Ned Tynan down and break his neck in a ditch." His face was growing fierce as he spoke.

"Oh, if you only *would!*" she cried. "What am I saying? I must be very wicked."

Her face went down into her hands in shame at this outburst. His took on a blank, bewildered look.

"Well, I won't," said he at last, "—unless he's insulted you."

"No! no!" she protested. "I don't know what made me say anything."

He tried another question or two, but with no result, for she was relapsing into her usual impassiveness; so that at last he went out looking darkly and shaking his

head. Nothing pertaining to him must be despitefully treated, unless by himself. His first fancy, even more unpleasant, lingered too. It was not easy to brush the episode from his mind.

He knew Ned Tynan well as a beau of the persistently unmarrying sort, good for at least three feminine generations; a bit of a wanderer, who had spent his early manhood—and much besides—in a Western city, bringing back little except a fiction of legal experience and a rakish reputation.

But he came no more, and Mrs. Cullen barely spoke to him when they met. If there were anything between them, as the saying goes, it must be a wall of ice.

In course of time accident, or what seemed such, drew the two men more together. Cullen found, with surprise, that Tynan shared his tastes and could enter into his strange and reckless humor. Under mellowing influences they grew confidential, and Cullen learned many things dimly touching the frontiers of his own interest. He was aware that he sometimes surprised these little admissions rather unfairly; for who can keep a secret, though in honor bound, forever out of reach of a man who is with him most of the time and on terms of sympathy? With some further craft of this sort, though touched in conscience, Cullen chose his time to lament the unhappy predicament of one like himself, keenly alive to attractions in a certain quarter, yet bound for life to a human iceberg.

"Perhaps not so much of an iceberg as you think," mused Tynan aloud, lolling back against the roadside moss with a retrospective air. He hardly seemed to know that anybody heard him.

Down in the woods below the hounds were quartering the ground hither and thither in search of the lost trail. They had been long at fault, and most of the huntsmen were taking their ease like our sympathetic couple, though here and there one still kept the saddle. None were very near.

Cullen looked at his companion keenly, though in no unfriendly way, and answered: "I never knew her to drop the iceberg but once. Do you know, I was almost jealous of you that time, old fellow!"

Tynan smiled lazily. It was an Indian summer day

and they had ridden far. "Almost!" said he. "That's not bad. Do you think I am blind? But you should have known better. No need to be jealous of *me*."

"Who, then?"

"I haven't said or intimated anybody."

"What did you mean by laying such emphasis on *me?*"

"Did I? I never was good at that matter of emphasis. Something like punctuation—one gets mixed. To be precise, then, I don't think you need disquiet yourself for any soul alive."

"There you go again."

"Well, what shall I say? There are no dead souls, are there? And if there are, they don't give much trouble about women, do they? I ask for information."

"No, but it's conceivable that a living man should trouble himself infernally about the past doings of a dead one."

"Would that be philosophical?"

"I'm not a philosopher, sir—I'm a gentleman—and the last of a race whose women have never disgraced them."

"All very commendable, and no one doubts it. But if there were anything wrong you couldn't kill a dead man."

"No, but I could kill her."

This summary solution did not meet with favor.

"What!" exclaimed Tynan, "for something that happened before she had even heard of you? Besides, every one would lay it to the influence of the charming widow, and you'd get neither her nor anything else—except a rope collar. No, if matters come to any such desperate pass, there's a better and more effective way."

"What's that?"

"Why, in this State—not in any other that I know of—the same cause which constitutes the strongest ground for divorce, if it happens *after* marriage, will suffice if proven to have occurred *before*. The old commonwealth does not mean that honest men shall be cheated in what concerns them most. The old English law went much further at one time—in the case of the king. But I don't mean all this as applying to you. I only speak generally."

Iron Cullen thought darkly for a few moments. "But if it were so," he asked, "could I really get a divorce?"

"Certainly."

"And marry the other—you know."

"Yes, if she would have you. Marry anybody you like—of the right sex."

"Well, then, what *is* the truth?"

"How can I say? There were some odd facts. But it's awkward business——"

The cry of "Tally-ho!" broke out above and below them, and as they mounted, they could see a small red figure streaking across the field on the right, with the hounds hot after it, running by eye. In a moment the whole rout of men and horses went plunging through gaps in the worm-eaten zig-zag fence or over its lower parts; all aiming for the point where the fugitive was about to disappear in the woods. Iron Cullen's shout was the loudest. It was no time for him to think of women. But Tynan knew that the time would come.

In the course of the next forenoon, as Mrs. Cullen was walking and thinking by herself in the garden, Edward Tynan appeared, bowing deferentially.

"I know you forbade me the place," said he, "but I come on important business."

"My husband is away," she replied coldly.

"Or I shouldn't come. My business is with you."

"There cannot possibly be any between us. Will you leave me?" And she pointed toward the gate.

"One minute. I was not threatening idly when I said that you could be divorced as well as exposed. We are in a position to prove"—and he went lightly, with running emphasis, over a string of particulars which she could not choose but listen to. They took away her breath.

"You must have employed spies," she said at last, slowly.

"Detectives—a neater word. But you will admit that our case could hardly be more complete if poor Jim Swinton himself were to rise and testify."

"I believe he *would* play into your hands."

"That is not needed. Your husband has got to the point of simply wanting a pretext and a weapon. I

can give him both, and the certainty of being set free to court the florid widow. Or I can suppress it all and let matters be as they are, except a little superfluous affection directed toward myself. What a pity you won't be amenable!"

The woman seemed hunted down and driven to bay. She had much ado to breathe, and her eyes burned, glancing desperately here and there. If they had been daggers they would have gone to his heart as they rested for a moment on the spot beneath which that organ ought to be. Understanding all this and watching warily, he smiled; whereupon she seemed stung into self command again, and wheeling without a word, went straight back to the house.

"She will scarcely be so haughty," thought Tynan, "when she finds herself without marriage-ring, house, or good repute. She will be glad enough to come to terms then."

Perhaps he feared some reckless candor toward her husband. At any rate he took care to keep them from meeting. Cullen was then awaiting Tynan at the village, violent in his determination to know everything. In this, of course, he succeeded. The chain of proof laid before him was enough to appall anybody. Cullen drew a long breath.

"It strikes me, Ned," said he, "that you must have had some motive in all this industry."

"A lawyer's motive," answered the other, smiling. "Of course I expect to be well paid for working up the case."

"Oh, hang it, yes! But, after all, I don't know that I care. There are the facts. It's clear I put my foot in it. Regularly sold! Well, when you find a weed in your garden there's only one course. Let us end this thing forthwith."

"And put a flower in place of the weed," suggested Tynan.

Cullen nodded. So they brought their joint brain-power to the composition of a letter intended for the defendant-elect.

It pointed out in polite polysyllabics that her unfortunate ante-nuptial experience was fully understood and capable of demonstration; that the undersigned, though

preserving the disposition to judge her leniently, could by no means allow her to remain longer in the home of his ancestors; that he would remain away during one week, which period he allowed for her departure; that he inclosed a check sufficient to supply her wants for a long time; but that divorce proceedings might be looked for with the least possible delay. It had a very official tone and aspect when complete.

This was what she received that evening, instead of the husband, whom she had meant to tell at any risk everything, old and new.

The servants told afterward of sounds like passionate weeping, but when she appeared before them her face had grown quite calm again. The next day she vanished from the county as though she had never been.

Iron Cullen took it simply as good luck, ordered the house to be swept clean of all reminders of her and hurried forward his divorce-seeking and his love-making on parallel lines.

But public opinion has weight with even a "devil-daring" woman; and public opinion in rural Maryland has never favored divorce, far less flirtations while divorce is pending. The widow grew so very unpopular that she began to feel it as a punishment. Indeed, there were those who said, for her ears, that whatever were the sins of the first Mrs. Cullen, it might be possible to make a change for the worse. Certainly there were pleasanter places and pleasanter people abroad, so she took wing for Paris, coquettishly slighting the pleadings of her lover and good-humoredly leaving him to fight their joint battles alone. Before long she was disporting herself, florid and gorgeous, in the sunshine of counts and barons, genuine as to the title at least.

This went on so prosperously that just as Iron Cullen was let out of matrimony, she had pretty well made up her mind to re-enter it—a countess. The thought pleased her so that she wrote him nearly in those terms, with a little flaunting of coming aristocratic feathers, and great, though not overwise, reliance on the distance between them. As a woman of experience, she must have known that he would swear blackly and copiously—which indeed he did; but who could dream that even Iron Cullen would leave a sequestered Mary-

land county on twenty-four hours' notice for the mere pleasure of slapping the face of a happy nobleman whom he had never seen?

His appearance before them on the boulevard was in many ways like that of one risen from the dead. The sensation was immense,—even that particular part of it which settled on the count's cheek as he went reeling. For a week the dramatic figure from over sea, with his careless attire, his hauteur and fierceness, his general air of a barbaric provincial prince in a fury, was about the most widely known in the gay capital. By the end of that time the two principals were stretched at full length, with the anatomy of each doubtfully improved by the addition of lead; while the widow dolefully reflected that in her haste to exchange one aspirant for another she had probably lost both. Nevertheless, there was fame in the little passage at arms. It might enable her to take a loftier flight. She had decorations in her eye just then.

Time passed, and they did not die, but, rather, slowly crept toward recovery, with sundry twinges and aches, but a great development of mutual content. Why not? They had had "satisfaction" together, a thing very dear to the heart of the Southerner and the Frenchman. Moreover, they could smile in duplicate the smile of the disillusioned and deserted, as they saw their late enchantress in full pursuit of a wandering Garter. These things made a rational basis for comradeship of the kind that takes to not very reputable gayety. Before long they were in a fair way to discover just how many different kinds of dissipation Paris contains.

But this was expensive, and it was with much inward delight that the count stood under a very shower of gold, for was he not getting the chief good of marriage, without any of its fetters and burdens? What a charming adjustment of nature that in the New World the cataracts fall in full flood forever! It never occurred to Cullen to say anything either way on this question of exhaustibility. Money never had much value to him, and least of all now. So it was a dismal surprise when he coolly turned to the count one morning, pocket-book in hand, and said:

"Well, the dance is ended. I have just about enough left to take me home."

"I thought monsieur was a gentleman of fortune," remarked the count, with irrepressible reproach, as soon as he could command himself.

"And now that I'm not, you don't think well of me," commented Cullen dryly. "I might have known it. But no matter. It comes to this, count—a fortune is as people see it. In what you'd call my province I had enough, unless you're uncommonly expert in spending. Well, I reckon I must have been, for the old place was pretty well mortgaged before I left. But Paris is a devouring fire. It has gone through everything. So—good-by."

Possibly he may have had even yet some hope that his fellow-spender would aid him in this strait. But the count naturally felt this to be unreasonable. His business was to suck oranges, not to supply them with juice. Every man to his trade. So they parted morosely and Paris knew Iron Cullen no more.

On his return to Maryland he found matters at their worst. He could postpone foreclosure but a little while, and this interval he devoted characteristically to riotous living. When not out of his wits, he was on horseback; and truly sometimes both together. Through the dining-room he clattered at will, drinking clear liquor by the gobletful and making havoc of everything which stood in his way, till even the servants, with all their retainer feeling, looked forward to the sale almost as a relief.

It came at last, but Cullen was gone with some odds and ends of furniture and a worthless old negro to a wood-lot well up in the hilly wilderness. The most grasping creditor would think twice before following the ruined man thither for so little.

Besides, at this crisis the first aid came. It was in the form of a check signed by his divorced wife, and covered the full amount which he had sent her in his letter of repudiation. A brief note accompanied it, saying that she had always regarded it as a loan to be repaid when most needed by him, and she hoped that it might be used so as to add permanently to his comfort.

The old negro who was his stand-by declared that after getting this helpful missive "Marse Iron done ma'ch straight out de cabin an' up en down de fiel' mighty nigh half de day, makin' faces like he was studyin' 'bout cryin' "—really a very fair description of his behavior.

Then Cullen jumped on his horse and made quick work of the road to the county seat, entering Tynan's office abruptly and thrusting the letter under his eyes without a word.

"My dear fellow, I congratulate you," cried Tynan, as he caught its drift. "And myself, too," he added, his eyes twinkling.

"Yourself?"

"Yes. I've hunted high and low for that woman a dozen times. There never was such a case of vanishing."

"What do you want with her?"

"Bless me, Cullen, what a tone! Life in the woods doesn't improve your voice. I thought you had given up all interest in that quarter."

Cullen looked at him sternly for a while. Then he said:

"There are some very strange features in this business. But, at any rate, she shall not suffer for having acted generously by me. I haven't found that line of treatment over-common, Mr. Tynan. If you use this letter as a clue or seek to trouble her in any way, my advice, sir, is that you indulge in a little target practice first. I shoot better than I used to."

Tynan could not quite hide his discomfiture, but covered his retreat with:

"I didn't know you felt that way about it. Of course you are aware that you can marry her again, if you don't mind bygones."

"That's another part of speech, but do *you* mind what I say." And the tall, gaunt man strode out through the doorway.

Galloping homeward, he felt a certain sense of virtuous relief, being not the only man who has appeased a grumbling conscience by rebuking a third party. The episode really made a better and more comfortable man of him in other ways—for a while. But it could

not last long. He soon began to find the lonely wilderness unbearable, and took to inviting wild and unedifying company, who spent the nights with him over cards and drink, with much uproar which the listening pines never reported. His centaur habits came charging back on him in full force.

By the outbreak of the civil war his money was all gone again. Of course his sympathies went vehemently with the States in revolt. The fighting instincts of a race which had been in every conflict since early colony days awoke within him. Mexico, 1812, the Revolution, seemed to call on Iron Cullen for something manlier than the life and death of a drunken semi-savage. Not stopping to reason the matter, he turned over to old Julius the little patch of corn land and the unprofitable waste of woods, and appeared suddenly as a volunteer in the camp of General Lee.

His life and doings did not differ widely from those of other soldiers on either side. But at last something occurred which was more to him than many battles. This was the delivery of a letter written six months before in a New England village. Here it is:

"My Dear Friend:

"I have no right to call you more, but I do not wish to think of you as less, after all that has been. I *had* loved some one else, a friend of Mr. Tynan, long since dead—as I shall be soon—so I will say no more about him. Only this I must add—he cared nothing for my reputation, even in matters where I was not at all to blame. A scandal had begun to threaten when you appeared, a man of a totally different type, urging me to go with you into a new life. It was a great temptation. I thought no echo of my trouble could ever reach me there. I believed that I should learn to love, as he deserved, one who at least was straightforward and daring.

"You know how utterly both hopes failed; so utterly that at the last I was willing to escape again and leave you free, whatever might be said of myself. I knew the evidence would be too strong for me. I could not bear to be the chief figure of a court-room show, undergoing the persecution of Mr. Tynan, there and thereafter. It has seemed to me that I care more for you since your troubles came, and I tried to help when things were at the worst. Sometimes I think I ought to have stayed near you and striven to bring out the truth—for your

sake as well as my own. I ought to have borne and forborne. Ah, how much there is that I ought to have done and did not!

"But whatever you know or hear or believe of me, you must *not* believe that I ever was guilty as they said. Now, very near death, I assure you that it is not true. Let me sign myself once more by the name to which I have no legal right. Lovingly, MARTHA CULLEN."

Below, in another hand, were the words: "Died one week later," and a signature with "Rev." before it—as though the writer could not trust himself to add more.

"Bad news?" asked a comrade, staring at Cullen's face.

"Oh, life! life! life!" cried Cullen in bitter arraignment, and broke off, crushing the letter in his hand. Then smoothing it out again on his knee, almost reverently, he looked around on sympathizing faces and tried to speak quietly. "When a man," said he, "has but one real friend on earth, and *that* one——"

But it was too much. He rose, and his arms went up rigidly above his head. Then, turning, he cast himself on the ground like a log, and lay there with hidden face, making no sound, but shaking a little from time to time.

No doubt it would have passed, as all passions do; but in the midnight there came a sudden alarm and a great rush. Iron Cullen knew its meaning, and sprang to his feet with a face of frantic joy. The surprise had been complete, the cries and weapons and strenuous forms of the enemy swept on them in an avalanche through the dark; all other opposition was borne away in a moment; but there, to the last, Iron Cullen was dimly seen, yielding no inch, but fighting like a man possessed—without the least care to guard himself or the slightest notice of any summons to surrender. When a counter-movement in force beat off the wave of attack, he was found lying dead where he had stood, with wounds enough to have killed him thrice over; long, rigid, haggard, and fierce, very literally "with his back to the field and his feet to the foe," several of whom lay near him. Perhaps neither they nor any other who died that night found death so welcome as did Iron Cullen.

The confession of a diffident young man, told by his confessor in the Chicago *Evening Post.*

A LUNCH PARTY.

I HAVE a friend who is one of the most talented young men in the West. The other day he came into my office and made a cold-blooded bluff about taking me out to lunch, at the same time flashing a one-hundred-dollar bill before my astonished eyes. I took him up, right then and there, of course. We went to the Richelieu and ordered in the neighborhood of sixteen dollars' worth of food and drink, and pitched into it as if we hadn't had anything before for twenty years. It was a safe bet that this remarkable exhibition of generosity meant that I was to be called upon to give up something, and, sure enough, I was.

"By the way," he remarked, as he was lighting his cigar, "by the way, old man, I want you to do something for me."

"All right," I replied promptly. A friend who blows you off to a sixteen-dollar dinner is entitled to a soft answer. "What is it?"

"I hate to ask you," he went on, puffing slowly at the cigar. "I am devilish diffident about asking favors of my friends, but you can do this, and I don't think that it will give you very much trouble. You know I have never struck you for any kindnesses, long as we have known each other."

"That's so," I answered. "Go ahead—I'll do anything I can for you."

"Well, you see," he went on, "it's like this. I am—no," he broke off suddenly, "I can't bear to ask it of you."

There were real tears in his eyes.

"Don't let yourself be disturbed, old fellow," I cried, very much affected. "Remember, I'm your friend."

"No, I can't do it," he said, when he had recovered his composure. "I can't bring myself to ask you right to your face."

By this time I was very curious to know what the

trouble was, and so I proved a soft mark. He had counted on that.

"No," he continued, "I can't tell you to your face. Perhaps I might be able to write it down and go out of the room while you read it. Will you promise me not to look at it until I have got clear outside?"

Of course I promised. What else could I do? So he wrote four or five words on the back of the wine-card, folded it up, and handed it to me. Then he shook my hand effusively, said I would never know how grateful he was to me for my kindness, and went outside dissolved in tears. When he had shut the door behind him, and not till then, I unfolded the card. And this is what he had written:

"Please pay for the lunch."

Englishmen are good fighters, and this one, whose story is told by Cuthbert Larking in *Temple Bar*, was more than a match for four Italians.

A FIGHT FOR LIFE.

I AM getting rather old, and live more in the past than in the future, but I have knocked about so much, and met with so many strange adventures during my life, that this must be my excuse for the love I have of every now and then taking up a pen and jotting down some of my recollections, when I seem in a manner to live my life over again.

I was always of a roving disposition, and could never rest very long in one place, so that I have visited most parts of the habitable globe, leaving home sometimes at a day's notice, intending to be away for months, and then as suddenly changing my mind and returning home again. I hate plans and arrangements made long beforehand, and I generally act on the spur of the moment. Although this habit, as the following story will show, has sometimes placed me in awkward positions, yet, on the whole, I am none the worse for my way of proceeding.

About twenty years ago I suddenly left London in the height of the season on one of these unpremeditated voyages. I was weary of the eternal round of London life, with its dinner parties, dances, and drums, and so determined to be off at once, not caring much where so long as I had a change.

Four days afterward I found myself seated at the table-d'hôte of the Croce de Malta Hotel at Genoa. But here, too, I was bored, and I began to wonder what had brought me. I knew no one in the place, and, hating sight-seeing, what was I to do?

After dinner I lit my cigar and strolled down to the port, looked at the many curious and varied craft packed together in the basin, and watched the picturesque groups of sailors from all parts of the world.

While lounging about I came across a lot of rough-

looking Italian sailors dressed in blue jerseys and jelly-bag scarlet caps. They particularly attracted me, for, being a bit of an artist, I have an eye for color, so I stood watching them for a minute or two, while they were talking eagerly together, and I caught the words Garibaldi and Caprera. I said before that I am given to sudden impulses. One of these now seized me. Why not go and visit this hero in his island home? True, I did not know him personally, but I had always heard that he liked Englishmen and received them hospitably. I was one of his most ardent admirers, and here was an opportunity of making his acquaintance and of seeing his strange home.

Half an hour before I had no more thought of Garibaldi than of the man in the moon, and now I found myself suddenly engrossed by the idea, as if a visit to Caprera had been the dream of my life. But how was it to be managed? I walked up and down for a minute or two thinking, and then determined to speak to this group of sailors. I am a good Italian scholar, so had no difficulty upon that score, although sailors' patois is rather different from the language used in polite society.

I approached the group, and addressing myself to a tall, broad-shouldered fellow with a long, shaggy black beard, I asked him if he knew of any ship sailing for Caprera and willing to take a passenger.

Italians are a very inquisitive race, and the fact that I, a stranger, had spoken to one of them, brought all the group, who had dispersed, close together, to hear what I had to say.

The man I had addressed, after looking at me and then at his companions, said, "Ah, signore, it will be a difficult matter to find a ship going to Caprera, for there is but little trade with the island, and it is rather out of the way for coasting vessels. I am only a common sailor, but here is Bartolo; he is the owner of a felucca which trades between Genoa and Leghorn; he may perhaps be able to tell the signore what he asks. Eh, Bartolo, what do you say?"

Bartolo, thus addressed, came up to me with his hands in his trousers pockets and a pipe in his mouth. He was a short, wiry-looking man, with a black mus-

tache and a dirty, unshaven face. He had a most evil expression of countenance, with a squint in his right eye, and when he intended to smile he seemed rather to frown. Altogether he was about as untaking-looking an individual as I ever met.

I repeated my question to him.

"Well," he said, "I don't often go to Caprera, for it isn't worth my while; but to-morrow night I am sailing for Leghorn, and as times are bad, if the signore likes to make some arrangement with me and my cousin, who goes with me, we might manage to leave our regular course and land the signore on the island; but I must first consult with him, as he is part owner of the craft."

The plan seemed as if it might answer, so I sent him off for his cousin to a neighboring wine-shop, and they soon returned together. He was a very different-looking man from Bartolo, and I rather liked his appearance. A tall, stout-looking sailor with a bland smile, but I noticed that he was entirely under Bartolo's thumb, and agreed with him in everything he said.

"Well, here is Antonio," said the latter. "He thinks that we might accommodate the signore; but the ship is not a fine vessel, so perhaps the signore had better see her before he decides. True, it is but a short journey of twelve or fourteen hours, so that a little discomfort will not much matter, especially as, this chance lost, it may be some time before another presents itself. Of course the signore understands that we are poor men, and shall require some good inducement to make us lose time by going out of our way; but if the signore will pay us one hundred lire (£4) down and give us a small 'buona mano' on arrival, we will take him."

The price did not seem extravagant, but it is always necessary to bargain with Italians, or they take you for an "imbecile" who can be easily robbed; so, bearing this fact in mind, I expressed astonishment at their asking so much, and told them it was quite out of the question. At last, after a deal of haggling, we agreed that if next day I liked the look of the craft, I would pay them eighty lire down, and give them another ten lire on their landing me safely at Caprera.

It was now getting late, so we separated, on the understanding that I was to meet Bartolo at the same place in the morning at eight.

I was there at the appointed hour, and found him waiting for me. His cousin, he said, had gone on board, and was getting things in order, as they were to sail at six that evening.

After walking a mile among a sea of masts and sails of all colors and shapes, we at last got to Bartolo's ship. She was a small coasting felucca with a large lateen sail, of the kind so common in the Mediterranean. Antonio and the man I had first spoken to the night before were busy stowing away a miscellaneous cargo of grain, fruit, and baccala, or dried stockfish, which it is to be hoped tastes better than it smells.

I stepped on board and was shown my cabin, if such it could be called. It was in the forepart of the ship and close to the mast. I entered it through a narrow, dark hatchway, and down a ladder of six or seven steps; and when I got to the bottom I had to bend almost double, as it was simply a square box about four feet high and six feet wide. Bartolo had certainly not lied when he made me understand that I should have to rough it. In one corner was a wooden bunk, with a dirty sheepskin laid over it. Furniture there was none; there was a horrid smell of bilge-water about the whole place, and the only light came through the open hatchway. Altogether it was a most uninviting place; but, reflecting that it was only for one night, and that, the weather being fine, I should probably pass most of the time on deck, I settled to sail with them, and to be on board again at half-past five. I now went on deck for a look round. There were three separate hatchways. In the middle one they were storing away the cargo, and the one aft was used by the crew.

I walked to the town and killed some time by looking into the different shop windows. I was much attracted by a gunmaker's who displayed a great variety of arms. I don't know what first put it into my head, but while gazing at these weapons, the thought suddenly struck me that as I knew nothing of the men to whom I was trusting myself, it might perhaps be as well

to have some weapon of defence about me. True, in my travelling-bag I carried a life-preserver given me years ago, which had slept there harmlessly ever since; but still a revolver would be more useful in case of accidents; so I walked into the shop, and after looking several of them over, ended by purchasing a small one, with a packet of cartridges.

I now went to the hotel to pack up my traps. I wished only to take what would go into my travelling-bag, so turned out everything I thought useless. In doing so I came across the life-preserver; I was about to chuck it aside, when I thought I might as well take it, and replaced it in the bag.

My arrangements were soon complete. I called the hotel-keeper, and told him I was going away for two or three days, and proposed to leave the remainder of my baggage in his charge. I then dined, paid my bill, and, bag in hand, strolled down again to the port.

All on board was ready for sailing. Bartolo came up at once and asked me for the eighty lire which I had agreed to pay in advance, as he said they had to complete some purchases before leaving.

At six o'clock sharp we left the harbor, with a fair wind; it was a beautiful evening, not a cloud was to be seen, and soon after dark a glorious moon rose out of the sea. I sat on deck smoking my cigar and enjoying the tranquillity of the scene, while being fanned by the soft sea breeze.

The crew consisted of Bartolo, his cousin, the tall man called Beppo, and a boy called Gigi.

For Italians they were not a sociable lot. I tried several times to get into conversation, but they seemed rather to avoid me, and continually whispered to each other in a mysterious way. This somewhat disquieted my mind, and I could not help reflecting that I had perhaps done a foolish thing in trusting myself to their tender mercies. No one knew of my expedition. I had paid them in advance, and they were sailing out of their course to please me. What was to prevent them from murdering me and throwing me overboard, and then continuing their regular journey without any one being the wiser?

I am not nervous, nor do I believe in presentiments;

but the longer I sat there the more would these lugubrious thoughts creep over me, until, feeling rather chilly, I went down to my cabin.

It looked an awful place at night, and more like a vault than anything I could think of. I undid my bag and caught sight of my revolver, which I had forgotten until now. This somewhat reassured me and I loaded it carefully. I then pulled out the life-preserver, and, placing these two friendly weapons by my side, I lay down on my bunk without undressing.

Looking up, I could see the broad lateen sail, through the hatchway, with the moon shining brightly on the white sheet. All was perfectly still, and I fancied that two of the crew must have gone down to sleep, leaving the third man at the wheel and the boy to look-out.

I tossed about, but could not sleep; the more I thought it over the more risky did my position seem, for, as I said before, no one knew where I was.

I had been lying down about an hour when I saw the shadows of two men reflected on the sail. I strained my eyes and ears. They were talking in low tones, but I caught the words "Dorme," then "Sara presto finito." What could this mean, if it did not refer to me? They were evidently preparing to murder me in my sleep, and my worst fears were about to be confirmed. A cold sweat covered my brow, and I seized my revolver, determined to sell my life dearly. The shadows had now moved away. All was still. I stepped out of my bunk, and, taking my life-preserver in my right hand, and the revolver in my left, I sat in a crouching position to await events.

Oh, the agony of these moments! I could neither stand nor sit, and I dreaded that before long I should be seized with cramp; yet it was imperative that I should keep quite still if I wished to take my assailants at a disadvantage.

It was not very long before the shadows on the sail again reappeared, and this time I noticed that one of them was armed with a long kitchen knife. The thought of the cold steel made me shudder, and my heart stopped beating for a moment. I felt my revolver to assure myself that it was all right, and then

saw that the hatchway was darkened. I had no time for further thought. One of the men was coming down the steps into my cabin. I could see him distinctly, but I was in the dark, so he was unable to see me. I noticed a gleam of steel in his hand, and the second man was following close behind him. Now was my time. I brought back my right arm for a good cut at him with the life-preserver, as soon as he should come within reach. A second later I had felled him with a fearful blow on the temples. I rushed over his prostrate form, and fired my revolver at the second figure, now retreating up the steps. The man uttered a cry of pain, an oath, showing that I had hit him, but still he and ran on. I followed quickly, rushed up the hatchway, and again fired at him just as he was picking up a crowbar. This time he fell on the deck, and I now saw the third man and the boy, thoroughly scared, making for the further hatchway. In a moment I made up my mind what to do. I followed them, and having with difficulty placed the heavy lid on the hatch, proceeded to cover it with everything I could lay hands on, on the deck. Luckily there was some pig-iron lying about, and with these bars and various other articles on the top of them I was sure that they were safe prisoners.

I now had to look to the other men, to see that they were incapable of doing further mischief.

The one I had shot on deck was Bartolo. My two bullets had taken effect, one in the left arm and the other in the leg. I drew him to the side of the ship and lashed him there with some rope, and I told him that if he attempted to get loose, I should shoot him dead; then, looking into my cabin, I saw Antonio lying where he fell.

I repeated my tactics of covering up the hatchway to prevent his getting out, and then went to the tiller, thoroughly exhausted after all I had been through, both physically and mentally, but most thankful for my narrow escape.

Soon, however, I saw that if I had got out of one danger, it was only to fall into another. I knew nothing of navigation, and was not even aware in which direction to steer. I might run the ship to ground, or a sudden squall might swamp her. I did not know how

to shorten sail, and was afraid to interfere with the ropes.

What could I do? The moon had now gone down, and it was pitch dark. There was no lamp or light of any sort about the ship, so far as I could see. With the help of a match I looked at my watch. It was two o'clock.

I thought of calling the man and boy out of the hold and threatening to shoot them if they did not navigate the ship properly, but I myself felt so tired and exhausted that I did not dare trust them, in case I should fall asleep.

On the whole, it was best to leave myself in the hands of Providence.

Oh! the dreariness of those hours of darkness, and the joy with which I hailed the first streak of dawn!

Every now and then Bartolo would give a curse and a groan, and that was the only sound to break the silence of the night. I had placed some water by his side and asked him if he wanted anything, but he only swore at me. I left him alone.

At last the sun began to rise, and I scanned the horizon for the welcome sight of land or a friendly sail. There was nothing to break the dull mass of water, and I was still miles away from rescue. The pangs of hunger were beginning to make themselves felt, and I had nothing to eat. If this state of affairs continued much longer, I should be obliged to call up the man and boy, and in my weak state I felt I should be entirely at their mercy.

I was beginning thoroughly to despair after so many hours of constant watching and straining of my eyes, when about eight o'clock I saw a speck on the horizon. My heart leaped with excitement as I instantly turned the helm in that direction. The speck grew bigger and bigger, until at last I made out the form of a brig sailing toward me. Soon I could make out a flag—the American Stars and Stripes. I tied my handkerchief to a stick and made signals of distress. For some time she took no notice, and seemed about to pass me. My heart sank. The thought that I was so near rescue, and yet could not attract attention, was awful. At last, to my joy, she hove to and lowered a boat. In a few

minutes it was alongside, and an officer and crew boarded the felucca.

The sudden relief to my strained nerves was almost more than I could bear, and it was some seconds before I spoke.

There was an expression of horror on the men's faces as they looked round on the scene of bloodshed, the wounded men, and then scanned my face for an explanation. Did they take me for a madman or a common murderer ?

At last I found my voice. They crowded eagerly round me to listen to my story, and when I had finished all congratulated me on my narrow escape.

The officer, who was the captain of the brig, hospitably invited me on board his ship. He was sailing to Marseilles, and would gladly give me a passage. Needless to say, I jumped at his offer.

We removed the covering from the hold, and called on the men to come up, but could get no answer.

The captain was in a hurry to continue his course, and would not wait any longer.

As I was stepping into the boat I asked him what we should do about the felucca and its crew.

"Well, stranger," he answered, "you're well out of it, anyhow; and I guess we'll now let them alone, to go to the devil their own way, and the sooner they get there the better."

I never heard anything more of them. I went straight back to England, and it was some months before I left home again.

She married him to reform him, and, as usual, the result was disastrous, but not in the usual way. Her story is told by Adair Welcker in the Washington *Hatchet*.

HOW HE WON HER.

He was seedy, but in this sense only, that his was the seediness of hayseed. There was hayseed in his hair, in his whiskers, through which the morning winds moaned, in his eyelashes, on the top of his head. His eyes had a far-away, searching-for-hayseed look, his voice seemed to have an intonation of it, and his general appearance was a conglomerate demonstration of hayseed as an extant fact.

As I had nothing on earth to do, I sat on a mound, and, while ants crawled up my trousers leg, I listened to him as he leaned against the rail fence and talked. His voice seemed to entice to the surrounding atmosphere the mingled odors of new-mown hay and of cows waiting to be milked.

I did not listen at first. He might have been a lark singing in a distant field, and I would have understood him as well, until my attention was attracted when he smacked his lips with intellectual gratification and self-satisfaction and said: "I always knowed it." From that time on I did not permit myself to lose a word. "He had a tarnal lot of grit as a lover, had Joe Corker," he said, "and wasn't the man never to give in. He kep' a-courtin' of her from the time she was a leetle baby gal at school till she was a old maid of forty-two and never lost hope. It was his way because of his grit. When he started in to do anything he generally done it, simply for no other reason than that he was the durndest feller. So when he went to love-makin' he was more desprit than a tiger had ought to dared to thought of bein'. He never give himself an easy job, either, for it weren't his way; for the gal he picked out growed up to be one o' them tough old birds what's the more obstinate the more uglier they are and bleeves in marriage as a failure. She were a gal with freckles same size as ten-cent dimes all over her. Well, when a man undertakes a job of that kind, even without the

grit of Joe as a lover, he keeps at it out of aggravation —you would yourself. Your vanity does it, for you say to yourself, 'if you can't capture a bundle of freckles, what can you do nohow?' In the mean time, as she grows older and gets obstinater and uglier you loses your temper and she loses hers, and neither of you never git it back again. So it was with Joe, but having the grit, as a lover, of which I've spoke, mere loss of temper was nothing to him. Well, he kep' on and kep' on and then he kep' on.

"One day she told him she'd come to the conclusion marriage were not a failure, which give him great joy. Then he got a set-back when he learned that a two-button cutaway chucklehead had commenced a-sparkin' of her under the delusion she was rich and was the cause of it. It was about that time Joe went West, taking a letter-writer with him, so he could send back a courtin' letter took out of the book from every station they stopped at.

"Well, after workin' at different things, always bein' as confident that he'd win as a frog is about its powers to chirp, if it took him a hundred years he'd git thar, he located in a cabin on a swampy tule farm up on four legs above the highest reach of the water. The tide was two feet deep over his land twice a day, so he built roosts all around his place for his chickens to roost on at high tide, for he raised chickens and honey for the city markets, and he rowed around in a boat to the nests to get the eggs. In the mean time, while doing so, he was always composin' love letters for to write, for he was poetical and done things by inspirations, and the inspirations always come when he was collectin' the eggs, especially if the hens had laid well.

"All around he seen bitterns flying, all pertticklerly fat with nothing apparently to eat. It was a caution how fat they seemed to grow and have oily, greasy countenances, all on nothing, and he couldn't make it out till he seen one flying one day close by, with a neck a yard and a half long, with a head for all the world like the head of a sarpent. Then he watched more of them with heads like corkscrews, and they seemed also to have amazin' long necks and sarpents' heads as they flew about in all directions. At last he see how they

et snakes, and that, as it took about half an hour to swallow them, they kep' flyin' round an' round while doing it, so's the motion would aid digestion. One day an idea struck Joe. He seen besides bein' so amazin' fat they were about the size of young chickens. So he killed one one day and chopped its legs and head off and plucked the feathers, and saw, for his purposes, it were a chicken. So, bein' so, he sent them to the city, to market, as chickens, with their heads off and blue an' yellow scalloped tissue-paper where their legs was cut off, where they gave him a great name because of their fatness, and the delicate taste of frog's legs which sarpents give the meat. In consequence he growed rich.

"In the mean time, while watchin' the bitterns and sarpents, all unconscious they was doin' it so he'd grow rich, and while pluckin' the feathers off, he was always busy meditatin' an' composin' love letters, and he was always beggin' her to come out and get married. But his ideas, however he put them, never fetched her nohow.

"At last one day, of a Sunday, he see he must have a change of ideas, so's he'd seem different—same as a man seems different in a different suit of clothes—to fetch Miss Selverton, the lady, and was wondering what would change them. He rowed in his boat to a neighborin' town, and on the way, though he'd never drank nothin' before, he determined he'd try gin. He'd hearn of a man once made a fortune by an idea he got by drinkin' gin, so he got two big black bottles and rowed home with them, determined to try it, for Joe was grit, so he done it.

"He opened one bottle, and while he was drinkin' it an idea come to him and he said to himself—for havin' no neighbors he choose to talk to himself—'I'll open the other in honor of her arrival when she gets here.' The idea, which was special brilliant, had come to him of its own accord, so he thought it was a sign of good luck, and put the unopened bottle aside. He then finished the other, and while so doin' he composed and writ a letter to Miss Selverton what fetched her with all her baggage. He'd dropped the letter-book style and just spoke plain. If I don't disremember he said: 'I've got the snakes, and I'm the first man that ever

found them payin' property and growed rich by it.' You see, he jist wrote plain that a-way. Then he went on and said: 'I've got a regular snake trust and the people never mistrust it, and it's the kind of trust what, so far from causing me to bust, would just make you bust with laughter if you saw the peculiar way I've growed rich. I had to give other people snakes before they'd come down with their cash. If you will come out, my dear, we will have the snakes together.' He spoke all through just plain, that a-way. Then he inclosed a check for a thousand dollars for her to come out with.

"Now you'd say she'd never come after that. Well, that's just where you're off. Bein' a woman what thought marriage was a failure, of course she was as full of notions as a river is of drink, so she seen she had a mission, and that mission was to save him from the snakes. It's the delight of that kind of woman's heart to get a husband who occasionally has the snakes, so she can hold him up to himself as a shinin' example of evil, and point him out to himself as a burnin' illustration of intemperance.

"She wrote to him when she started, and on the day she was to arrive he unloaded the other bottle of gin into himself. It was one of the luckiest things he ever took a notion to do and done. When she arrived she had the pleasure of seein' that her theory was correct, and when a woman has a chance to see that, she's as happy as a game-cock is when you put on his spurs for to fight, and with unbounded pleasure she gave him a witherin' look that she thought would make him shrivel up like a green leaf in a red-hot fire, and after makin' inquiries with intense politeness about the snakes, she took him off to church and married him. When after that she found him to be a total abstainer, with nothin' to reform, and she came to know which snakes he meant, she slowly faded away with disappointment and died of grief. Joe then went East, and when last heard from had married a young dudine out there. That was all, as far as I've heard," he said, and the labors of the day being thus ended, he departed and left me alone to those solitary meditations which the ants were now arousing within me.

Railroad stories are always interesting, and this one, written for ROMANCE by Charles Scates, is among the best of its class.

THE SUPERINTENDENT'S STORY.

"TOM, you have never told me how you got that scar across your forehead. I know you won't mind my asking, old boy."

It was near 5 o'clock on a dull December evening, in the private office of my old friend Tom Manning, the general superintendent of one of the great Western railroad systems, that this remark was made. I had dropped in, upon his invitation to dine with him at his home that evening, and had found him busily engaged in correspondence as usual, after most of his clerks had left the outer office. He had just handed the boy his last letter, sent word to his head clerk that he need wait no longer, and was reaching down into the lower part of his desk for the brands of cognac and cigars that had long since made his reputation among his friends as a connoisseur in that line and a high liver generally.

To my surprise I noticed a slight start, and, as he turned to set the brandy and cigars before me, I saw a well-defined look of pain in the eyes that were usually so bright and joyous. Motioning to me to help myself, he poured out an unusually large drink, tossed it off in a nervous manner that further attracted my attention, lit his cigar, and, leaning back in his chair, shut his eyes and puffed out cloud after cloud of smoke in a jerky way that contrasted strongly with his ordinary quiet, phlegmatic manner of smoking. It seemed a long time before the smoke ceased rolling upward; and when his eyes opened, he turned to me a face that had grown so white and troubled that I began to fear I had committed some great blunder. But though the eyes were soft and sad, the voice reassured me as it said:

"No, Tom, I have never told you about that night. I try not to think of it, and I would not have believed that the thought of it could hurt as much as it did just now when you recalled it."

He stopped, the eyes closed again, and a slight shiver passed through his frame. With a determined shrug of the shoulders he fortified himself by another dose of brandy, and, leaning back in his chair, went on:

"I have told you before that I commenced at the bottom round on this road. While 'braking' I took a fancy to be an engineer, and after a preliminary apprenticeship on a freight run I got a position to 'fire' for Ned Baldwin, the brightest and ablest engineer that ever opened a throttle-valve. Ned had the sweetest little woman for a wife you ever saw, a lovely boy of three, and as neat and dainty a home as any man could wish for; and I considered it a great privilege to get an occasional invitation to take dinner Sunday and spend the evening at his quiet home. But Ned had one failing that was a source of the greatest uneasiness to his wife, and about which she consulted me tearfully many and many a time; he drank steadily, regularly, heavily—not spasmodically and violently like a periodical 'bummer,' but morning, noon, and night, quietly and persistently. He was a middle-aged man who had married late and whose habits had been firmly fixed before he met his wife. I never knew him to be drunk, and he never neglected his duties or his wife and child, but usually by the time his engine was turned in, his lower jaw had fallen a little, his eyes had lost something of their brightness, and his words came slowly and stumblingly. But his hand was firm and his eye was steady as long as he was on the road. It was when he got down from the cab that he seemed to collapse suddenly, and I knew that his first steps would be toward a saloon adjacent to the round-house, to get something to 'brace up his nerves,' as he used to say.

"So things went on for several years. No one but myself knew of the change that was slowly coming over the once eagle-eyed, iron-nerved Ned Baldwin. No one but myself knew how he would sometimes leave his seat, go to the door, put his foot down on the step, and look off into vacancy in a troubled, absent-minded sort of way for ten or fifteen minutes at a time, then come back muttering to himself and resume his seat again without seeming to notice that while he was gone I had taken his place at the lever. No one but

myself knew how he would sometimes turn his eyes squarely on me, and, with a look that showed plainly his mind was wandering a little, say:

"'Tom, ain't we behind time? It seems to me we are barely creeping along. Hadn't I better give her another twist?'

"'No, Ned,' I would answer soothingly, 'don't you remember we ran in a little ahead of time at Braceville, and we were not due at this last crossing for over a minute? Better ease her off a little.' And then I would walk over, take him gently by the arm, and put her back a notch or two.

"Sometimes in winter, when the days were short and our headlight was lit, he would give me that same strange, dull look, and saying, 'Tom, I want to go out and get some air,' would creep out through the window and work his way along to the cow-catcher, where he would stand, peering steadily into the darkness with his hand above his eyes, as though trying to see something just ahead, while I slipped into his place.

"On some occasions he would shout back to me: 'Come, Tom, shake her up a little! She's not moving at all.'

"I was a young man then, thoughtless and careless of the future, not given to moralizing or to physiological speculation, and I did not realize what must be the inevitable result of his disease; but I did realize, with a daily-increasing sense of pain, the effect of his habit upon the loving wife who watched, with beating heart and swimming eyes, evening after evening for his return. It was a well-kept secret between us two; and though she never spoke of it, more than one trembling pressure of the hand and many a grateful look from those soft brown eyes, when I left him with her at the door after a day of unusual indulgence on his part, told me plainly how thankful she was for my friendship and help.

And when, at intervals, Ned's hands would tremble visibly for days at a time, and he would be morose and unreasonably irritable and fault-finding, I knew he was making a brave effort to abstain; and the picture of a sad scene at the house where her imploring eyes were looking into his and praying him for his own sake —for hers—for the child's—to keep up the fight, would

make me set my teeth and bear with him without a word. Although I drank occasionally myself, as most young men do, I made it a point never to drink with him.

"Things ran on in this way for years without much outward change taking place in him so far as I could see. At that time our run was on the northern division, leaving River Junction about noon and reaching Plainfield about 8 P.M.; and back again the next noon —the best-paying run on the road and one of the most responsible. Ned's home was a few rods from the track, about half a mile from the depot; and coming or going, night or day, he never failed to notice the sweet face in the open door, or the quiet form outlined against the lamplight in the window, that was ever on the watch.

"One day in the winter of 186–, just before the holidays, we started from the junction with an unusually heavy train. For two or three days previously Ned had been making another desperate effort to break off drinking; but the moment I joined him in the cab that day and noticed that his sullen, despondent, and irritable manner had given way to one of cheerfulness and exhilaration, I knew that the attempt had been futile, and that he had again sought relief in his old haunts and habits. My heart fell as I thought of the terrible disappointment in store for that eager face at the window; but those thoughts were soon displaced by more alarming ones when I discovered, soon after we started, that for the first time since I had run with him Ned Baldwin had brought a bottle of liquor into the cab and was evidently determined to indulge without restraint.

"Baldwin was fully fifteen years older than I was, the best engineer I have ever known in my railroad experience, and a man of sturdy sense and honesty; and his years and abilities, together with an undefined feeling on my part toward his wife, who was about my own age, had always exacted from me a certain respectful and deferential manner toward him this side the border-line of complete familiarity.

"But the shock of the discovery brought before me more vividly than ever the grave responsibility that rested upon us both, and gave to my tones more of

anger and decision than he had ever heard from me before. With flushed cheeks I said sharply:

"'For God's sake, Ned, you are not going to drink until we get in, are you? We've got a heavy train, it's getting foggy, and you need all the wits you've got.'

"Then the old habit reasserted itself, and I added in a lower, half-apologetic tone: 'You never drank on the run before, Ned.'

"He had turned his head toward me with a quick, nervous motion when I uttered the first words, but the surprised look in his eyes gave way to one of merriment as I finished, and he answered, with a loud laugh that somehow jarred on me dreadfully: 'Why, my boy, I never felt better in my life. Look there!'

"And he held before me his outstretched fingers, that I could see were shaking visibly, notwithstanding the boast that accompanied the action:

"'Firm as a rock, my boy!'

"Almost instantly the smile on his face was chased away by a deep frown, and he resumed his seat, muttering low to himself:

"'I'm cold as hell, and I propose to have something to keep me warm. I'll make the run all right, never fear. Firm as a rock! Firm as a rock! I must keep warm, though!'

"His decided voice and manner reassured me somewhat, notwithstanding his peculiar words and actions, and I concluded that perhaps he had not been indulging more than usual, after all, and that he would, as he said, 'make the run all right.'

"It was the first time that a doubt had ever entered my mind as to his ability to make his run as usual, and the first time I had ever been forced to the contemplation of the probable and immediate consequences that must follow a continuation of his course, and of the responsibility that rested upon me in concealing the true state of affairs from the officials of the road.

"Was the time coming when my friendship and affection for Ned and his wife must come in conflict with my loyalty and sense of duty to my employers? The fear depressed and irritated me, and I tried to shake it off by assuring myself that there was no foundation for it. But it altered my manner and checked my usual flow

of spirits, and volubility, and I soon saw that Ned noticed the change, though he made no comments upon it.

I, too, saw that a decided change had come over him during the afternoon. He was moody, reserved, and taciturn, moved about restlessly and started when I spoke to him. I soon noticed that he was watching me in a furtive, suspicious way, and that he never turned his back to me once, but changed his position as I busied myself with my work, keeping me always within his range of vision. His frank, good-natured expression was replaced by a scowl and a compression of the lips that were never present except when he had one of his 'spells.' But what gave me a greater uneasiness than anything else was the absence of that habitual watchfulness of the track ahead that is a second-nature to all old engineers and had always been so marked in him. He seemed utterly indifferent to everything in front, and only intent upon watching me and casting nervous glances behind—handling the lever and sounding the whistle as though he were an automaton.

"As night came on and the fog settled down thicker and thicker my anxiety on this point broke down my habitual reserve, and I ventured to remonstrate:

"'Ned, the fog is getting very thick ahead, and this thaw may give us some trouble with some of the culverts. And you know they expect the gorge at Eagle River to go out any moment. You don't seem to be watching ahead very closely.'

"The scowl deepened a little and his eyes never left mine, but he did not answer. A little frightened at my own temerity, I added:

"'You don't feel very well to-night, do you, Ned?'

"Instead of soothing, this appeared to anger him, and he growled out roughly:

"'Yes, I do feel well, too. I'm as straight as a string.'

"Then his voice took on a threatening tone as he added:

"'Seems to me you're pretty clever with your fault-finding this afternoon. I'm running this engine, by God.'

"All this was very unlike the Ned Baldwin I had known so many years, and only increased my perplexity.

"As the afternoon wore away his nervousness and restlessness increased, and the conviction was forced upon me finally that he was apprehensive of some bodily danger. I noticed several times when my work took me toward him that he shrank back a little and moved his hand toward his pistol pocket.

"I knew that he had always carried a revolver ever since he was 'held up' one night on his way home under the influence of liquor; and finally it occurred to me that the movement was an involuntary one for safety.

"All talk between us had ceased now, except such as our duties made necessary, and we sat silent and moody as mile after mile was told off with horrible rapidity.

"It was with a feeling of relief that I at length caught sight of the lights of Cedarville and realized that we had before us only a forty-mile run with but one stop, and that we should be home in about an hour. I had heard some talk at a previous station about the superintendent being out on the road in a 'special,' and I knew we were to get our final running orders at Cedarville; but I was a good deal surprised when Ned said to me as we pulled up, looking me searchingly in the eyes:

"'Run back and get the orders. I want to look after the engine a little.'

"I thought this a rather strange proceeding, knowing that the conductor invariably brought the telegraphic orders to Ned with such explanations and directions as might be necessary, but I obeyed without a word.

"When I returned with the conductor we found Ned standing opposite the front platform of the first car; and as he listened silently while the orders were read to him by the light of the conductor's lantern, I was startled by his haggard face and the wild, strained look of his eyes.

"The dispatch said that the gorge above Eagle River had given way; that we must make a full stop at the bridge and then go over very slowly, watching carefully for danger signals; and that we must do likewise at Silverton Creek. Furthermore, that the superintendent's car was out on the road running 'wild,' and if we were

ten minutes late at Taylor's Mill we were to take the siding there and wait for the 'special' to pass. Otherwise we had the right of way to Plainfield, where the 'special' would wait for us.

"Ned remained silent and motionless when the conductor finished, merely nodding his head slightly in acceptance of the orders, and then followed me hurriedly into the cab as the starting signal was given.

"At the first movement of the engine the gong in the cab clanged loudly, and the bell-cord, which had snapped sharply, trailed down on the floor.

"I started nervously and looked at Ned, expecting to see him reverse the lever. Instead of doing this he opened her out wider, and his eyes met mine with a triumphant glare. A sudden dread took possession of me, and thrusting my head out of the door I looked back. Through the fog I could see the faint reflection of the lights from the cars, that were standing motionless, and the conductor's lantern repeating the signal to go ahead, both rapidly growing dim in the distance.

"I had guessed rightly. Ned had uncoupled the engine, forgetting to cut the bell-cord, and I was alone with a madman!

"The same triumphant, satisfied smile was on his face as I turned back into the cab with a sinking heart. No need to tell him what had happened! No use to ask him to go back!

"All his actions during the afternoon that had led up to this were clear to me now—his moodiness—his indifference to the safety of the train—his fear of bodily harm—his optical illusions—his devilish cunning in sending me after the orders! But, crazy as he was, he must have some purpose in view. What was it?

"As I stood looking at him breathlessly, this last thought shaped itself into words that were uttered mechanically, and so low that I thought at first he did not hear me:

"'For God's sake, man, what are you going to do?'

"He was watching me closely, but for some reason hesitated a moment before answering. Then, bending his head forward slightly he said in a hoarse, eager whisper:

"'Going to get away from those devils! Didn't

you see 'em on the platform of the express car—swarms of 'em? They have been there all the afternoon—devils and snakes—bats and owls! See! See!' he screamed, suddenly straightening up and drawing back—'Look at 'em! On the coal—creeping over the tender there! Keep back! Keep back!'

"He uttered these last words in a low, threatening tone, and with a frightened, defiant, desperate air, shrinking back and down into a corner of the cab until he was nearly doubled up.

"Instantly there was a flash and a dull report and he straightened up again with a shout:

"'Hah! I hit 'em! I hit 'em! They're gone!'

"My blood had been running cold as I watched him and I hadn't moved.

"He seemed more rational now, and, putting his pistol back into his pocket with a sigh of relief, leaned wearily against his seat.

"I had time to think now and to realize the horror of the situation. At another time the mere speed of the engine would have frightened me, for she was swaying and plunging and pounding so that I was forced at times to grasp something to keep my feet.

"The wind had risen, and the fog had thickened into a mixture of rain and sleet that clinked and pattered against the cab windows and was dashed into our faces by the loose canvas curtain of the cab that the wind shrieked and moaned and tore at with mighty throat and fingers.

"The great black wall of darkness outside deepened the loneliness and isolation of the two swarthy figures in the cab, over which the shifting and glancing rays of light from the flickering and dancing lamps played in fiendish mockery, and formed a background upon which the roaring furnace fire, through the occasionally-opened door, painted hideous figures that took the shape of the demons of my childhood!

"On we thundered, faster and faster! But not fast enough for my thoughts, which flew to the trembling bridge at Eagle River that we must soon cross. I seemed to hear the rattling and creaking of the iron above, and the gurgling, roaring, and crunching of the water and ice below! Would we go down there or be saved for a more horrible death?

"The 'special' was to wait for us at Plainfield if we were on time. At this rate we would be there 'way ahead of time. What if the 'special' happened to be on the main track? Would our conductor surmise the truth and wire ahead to clear the track? He could surely reach the 'special,' but what about No. 9, the regular through train that was due to meet us at Plainfield? Could they reach it in time—or would we dash through Plainfield and strike it just beyond in the darkness and mist? Our conductor might wait for our return until too late to wire. What if the expected wash-out at the creek had broken down the wires?

"I was a young man then, vigorous, ambitious, and hopeful, and life was very sweet to me, but the fear of my own death seemed overshadowed by the horror of a threatened catastrophe that would involve the loss of many, many lives; and I almost felt as if I would be willing to take my chances alone with Ned if that catastrophe could be averted.

"My hope was that warning would be sent along the line in time. But even suppose it was—where would the end come for Ned and me? We could not go on indefinitely! A disaster of some kind was inevitable unless I could control him by force or cunning. And it was with a still greater sinking of the heart, and an inward prayer to that sad, sweet face at the window for justification and pardon that I set my teeth and resolved upon desperate measures if cunning failed.

"My thoughts had travelled with the speed of lightning, and now returned, in what seemed only an instant, to the sullen and gloomy figure opposite.

"If cunning failed should I risk a fair hand-to-hand struggle? A glance at the powerful arm and massive frame convinced me that it would be madness. I must watch my opportunity to disable him by a sudden blow. I would be justified in doing it. The safety of many lives—my safety—his own safety might depend upon it.

"Just then a tremendous lurch of the engine as we rounded a curve threw me violently against him, forcing him backward over the seat for an instant. With a startled exclamation and a dreadful oath he shook me off, steadied himself, and then struck me a fearful blow

in the neck; and as I fell weak and dizzy into the corner, he hissed out between his teeth:

"'Keep back! Keep back! you devil, or I'll kill you. You're one of 'em, but you can't get me. Don't come near me again or I'll give you this.'

"He drew his revolver, cocked it, and levelled it at me. I crouched closer and begged him not to shoot. He lowered it slowly and sullenly; but during the rest of that awful trip the revolver was either in his hand or on the seat within reach, ready cocked; and he watched me closer than ever.

"I felt sure that he guessed the thought that had been in my mind, for as I rose painfully from the corner he said sharply and peremptorily:

"'Pile on some coal there. We ain't half going. I can see the devils chasing us again, and you want 'em to get me.'

"Sure enough the devils were chasing him again; and for the next ten minutes, with bated breath and curdling blood, I watched him in the agonies of a convulsion that took the blood from his lips and cheeks and forced it into his eyes; that shook him from head to foot as a tornado shakes a sturdy oak; that forced him into a corner in abject terror, where he shouted and screamed and struck out wildly with his arms and legs in a vain effort to drive away the horrible creations of his inflamed brain.

"Soon they fled, leaving him a trembling, pallid wreck, with but a faint spark of reason that would leap up occasionally into a flame, only to die away instantly to a glimmer that was scarcely visible.

"From that time on to the end he stood at his post with blanched face, blood-shot eyes, and trembling limbs, mumbling, muttering, and whispering to himself, his body slightly turned so that he could watch me and the devils that would occasionally come and drive him into the corner in shrieking terror—his reason all gone now and nothing left but the animal instinct of fear and the desire to escape from his tormentors.

"I scarcely dared move, for he seemed to interpret every motion as a menace and played ominously with his revolver.

"On! on! on! we thundered with a speed that seemed

to make the very earth tremble and shrink away in terror. Occasionally in the blackness outside I recognized a prominent landmark; and as we plunged over Eagle River bridge I thought I heard voices above the awful roar and crash and caught a glimpse of red lanterns waving frantically to and fro. I was sure of this as we passed Taylor's Mill, further down the line, where the shouts and lanterns were plainly distinguished. So, then, the word had been passed along the line and they were trying to stop us.

"On we whirled—always and forever on! And so the long, long seconds and minutes slowly wore away, and at last we tore through the deep cut just north of Plainfield. I thought Ned recognized it, for he started at the additional roar, and just beyond it glanced out of the side window.

"All the time I had been looking forward to Plainfield with a peculiar dread and a feeling that the crisis must come there—due, no doubt, to the belief that the superintendent would take some decisive step.

"The strain on my nerves had been tremendous, but my excitement seemed to culminate now. Almost involuntarily I braced myself for some dreadful shock. My heart was beating so loud that I thought I could hear it above the deafening roar; the perspiration stood in great drops upon my cold forehead, and my breath was coming quick between my set teeth.

"I could tell by the dim lights coming into view, one by one, that we were on the outskirts of Plainfield; and suddenly a desperate resolve took possession of me to spring upon him as he stood and risk all in a life-and-death struggle. My life was at stake in any event, and might as well be risked here as in a crash a little way ahead.

"As I turned, his eyes caught mine, and I think there must have been something in my attitude that announced my purpose, for with a scream of terror, 'He's one of 'em! He's one of 'em!' he raised the revolver rapidly, fired full at my face, backed off hurriedly and awkwardly to the door of the cab, firing once more as he went, and with a pitiful cry, 'Save me, Lucy! Save me!' sprang wildly out into the darkness.

"I felt the sting of a bullet along my forehead and

had a sense of dizziness, but with a superhuman effort I sprang to the lever—threw it over with a mighty wrench—gave four or five screams of the whistle—staggered to the brake—set it with the strength of a giant—and—lost consciousness!

* * * * * *

"The engine stopped immediately in front of the station, alongside of the superintendent's car that was on the side track, and they found me lying face downward on the coal.

"When I opened my eyes in the station I only saw the frowning face of the superintendent of all those bending over me, and only heard his stern words:

"'What does this mean, Manning? Are you drunk, sir? Where's Baldwin?'

"Slowly the events of the night came back to me, and I answered feebly:

"'Ned was crazy, sir, and he jumped off the engine opposite his home.'

"The exclamation of pity and the softening of his face showed that he understood the whole thing in an instant. Ordering his colored porter to fetch me some more brandy and to see that my head was carefully dressed, he turned to his engineer and said:

"'Uncouple your engine, Wilson, and we will run up and find Baldwin if you know where the house is.'

"The thought of any one else breaking the awful news to Lucy seemed to bring back all my strength, and rousing up I said earnestly:

"'I am able to go, sir, and I can take you to the exact place.'

"He seemed surprised, but assented readily, and by the time we reached the dreaded spot the brandy and the excitement had put me firmly on my feet.

"Solemnly and with subdued voices we began the search, the dismal lanterns scattering up and down the track and coming together again to report that not a trace of him could be found. Suddenly a great fear seized me at the thought that perhaps he had dragged himself to the house; and breathlessly I hurried to the gate. As I neared it I heard the soft, sweet notes of Lucy's voice inside droning a lullaby, all unconscious of the dark, limp mass lying at the doorstep.

My heart ceased beating for an instant, and my eyes filled with tears as I stopped and motioned silence to those who had followed me. But the voices, low as they were, had attracted her attention, and just as we stooped over him the door suddenly opened, throwing a flood of light on the pitying faces round about and upon the bruised and battered form and blood-stained features below. She screamed—oh! I can hear it now—'Ned! O my husband!' and fell."

The superintendent's elbows were resting upon his knees now, and his face was buried in his hands. I had to lean forward to catch the rest. He went on, almost fiercely:

"I would not let any of them touch her, but carried her, myself, to a room apart from the one in which the rest were watching the last few flickering flames of poor Ned's life. She recovered consciousness in time to bend over him and hear the last few murmured words that his poor, delirium-tossed brain could form:

"Lucy—save me—devils!"

It was several minutes before the superintendent lifted a pale, sad face and said quietly:

"It is after six o'clock, and Lucy will be wondering what has become of us."

Lucy? Lucy?

True, I had always known that his wife's name was Lucy.

She welcomed me at the door with that sweet cordiality that had endeared her to all his friends, but, like him, seemed sad and serious; and as we sat a few moments awaiting the summons to dinner she glided softly to the back of his chair, leaned over him lovingly, and said in a low, sweet tone:

"Tom, dear, do you remember what anniversary this is?"

He started, glanced at me, saw that I heard, and nodding his head slowly, said musingly, as though continuing his story:

"True; it was eighteen years ago to-night. I had forgotten."

And then, without being told, I knew the sequel to his story.

This story, with a tramp for a hero and a police station for a stage, is from the St. Paul *Globe*.

DENVER PETE.

THE day had been even more than usually prolific of vagrants, and the big ram pasture in the rear of the station was packed with unfortunates of all sorts and ages. There were red-shirted and heavy-booted fellows from the lumber country, robust, bearded men, who seemed disgusted at their ill luck. There were old men and young ones, alike ragged and hungry-looking, and they crowded one and all around the big stove as though they never expected to see another. Among the unkempt and ill-smelling herd there were some striking characters. "Denver Pete," a big, muscular man, with a face resembling that of Bill Sykes, and a voice that might be likened to the rasping of a double-edged file, sat in a chair with his cap down over his eyes and both hands pushed deep in his trousers pockets.

He was talking about the Christmases of his boyhood, and of a little brick house he remembered away back in Ohio State, when the door of the tramp room opened for the entrance of a new guest. He was a youngster, this new-comer. There wasn't a hair on his face, and the clothes he wore showed that he had not been tramping it long. The lad looked at the crowd around him, and then turning to the jailer asked if there were any beds. A hoarse laugh from the old-timers, in which the officers joined, told that beds were not among the luxuries of life in trampdom. The door closed, and the boy found himself heir to the softest spot he could find on the floor. He was picking his way through the recumbent vags to a far corner of the place, when the voice of "Denver Pete" bade him stop.

"Come here, you!"

The stranger drew near, as though expecting some new gibe at his misfortune.

"Where're ye from?"

"I came from Hardin County, Ohio, and worked in a commission house on Robert Street until two months ago. Then I got sick. I was just let out of the hospital and haven't any money, so I had to come here."

"Where's your folks?"

"At Kenton, Ohio."

"Able to work now, ain't you?"

"Yes; I am going to work as soon as I can get something to do."

"Ever been trampin' before?"

"No, sir."

"Shut up and let folks sleep, can't you?" yelled a voice from across the room.

"Go to Jericho!" responded the questioner, at the same time taking from a pocket inside his shirt a greasy leather wallet. He drew forth a five-dollar bill, crumpled and torn on the edges, and handed it to the youngster with the remark:

"See here, pard, I guess you ain't used to bummin'. There ain't no beds here—nothin' but boards, an' hard boards at that. They don't serve breakfast reg'lar, an' the place ain't your style nohow. Here's a bill. You go out an' tell the hotel keeper the lodgin's ain't up to the mark. The five'll keep you through the week, an' then ye kin look fer a job."

"But maybe I can't get one right away," broke in the other.

"Well, mebbe ye can't; but try. My mother used ter tell me there wasn't nothin' like tryin'. It didn't never do me much good, but you take her tip an' try."

"I'll pay you back as soon——"

"All right," broke in the lender. "You jest address the letter 'Denver Pete,' Police Station, St. Paul, an' I'm liable to git it."

The sick man thanked his deliverer profusely, shook his hand, and withdrew.

"Got any more jokes to scatter, Pete?" asked a grizzled veteran of the road.

Pete got up and looked at the crowd before him.

"Youse fellers," he said, "reckon I done a fool job on that kid. Well, I knowed him. I come from Ohio myself, down around Kenton. I knowed his sister, too,

an' used ter take her sleigh ridin' behind my old dad's grays. She wouldn't have me, of course; couldn't expect it nohow, but I hain't goin' to see her kid brother goin' hungry."

"Where'd yer git the five?" asked a consumptive-looking listener.

"Been savin' it fer a month to celebrate on," and with that reply "Denver Pete" curled up near the base-burner for the night.

The story of a duel which was indefinitely postponed. Written for the Chicago *Journal* by Austyn Granville.

THE BUBBLE, REPUTATION.

I PASSED, yesterday, on State Street, a man who, not being able to hit a hay-stack, yet once acquired the reputation of being the best pistol-shot in all Paris.

In the summer of 1874, when Martin G. Scott was a much slimmer, more dandified-looking man than he is now—for he is married, and with the acquisition of a wife and three babies he has put away the vanities of dress—there were seated at one of the little round marble tables before the Café Ricci, in the Boulevard des Italiens, two young Frenchmen, the cheek of one of whom bore a red mark as if some one had brought his hand sharply against it. In an inner room of the café, the person who had done this was engaged in wiping away from his shirt-front the stains of some red wine, which in his fury the recipient of the slap had hurled across the table. The man with the red cheek was the young Adolphe Ferrier, the son of the celebrated artist of that name. The man with the soiled shirt-front was Martin G. Scott, of Mobile, Ala.

There had been an exchange of cards, and Scott and his friend, George E. Wainwright, twelve hours later suddenly found themselves with a large-sized, healthy French quarrel on their hands, to be settled, as most of those matters are in France, under the code.

When it came to a choice of weapons, Scott had wisely chosen pistols, for while he was a notoriously bad shot, he was totally ignorant of the use of the rapier.

The rapier, too, is a weapon in the use of which the gilded youth of Paris excel. Two years in the students' quarter had doubtless enabled Scott's opponent to become expert with the weapon. That is why, on Wainwright's advice, Scott chose pistols.

The affair was to come off at Auvergne, a little village distant about nine miles from Paris, in forty-eight

hours' time. The parties were to go out on the early train.

I doubt if Scott was so much cut up about the affair as Wainwright, even though he fully expected to be killed. Wainwright kept on blaming himself for ever having let his friend get into such a scrape. They had been college chums together, and Scott's father had put up the funds for the trip, simply providing that Wainwright, the elder of the two, and in whom he placed implicit confidence, should see that Scott was well looked after.

Here he was seconding the old man's son in a duel to the death, for that there was bad blood between the two principals you may depend on. It was to be no child's play this time, just something to amuse the readers of the *Petit Journal Pour Rire*. They were to fire at twelve paces, and continue firing until one of the parties was disabled.

The more Wainwright thought over the affair, the more he realized what an awkward job he had upon his hands.

What if his friend should fall! It would be bad enough to face Scott's father with news of such a character, but to communicate such a result to Mary Scott, his friend's pretty sister—to have to confess how poorly he had fulfilled his trust—that, he felt, would be a task beyond his strength.

He lay awake all night at his hotel, revolving some plan by which they could get out of the scrape. This was not so easy, for any scheme he might adopt looking to an avoidance of hostilities must necessarily involve the retirement of his friend with honor, of which, being a Southerner of the old school, he was singularly tenacious.

He had frequently seen Ferrier practising at a fashionable pistol gallery in the Rue du Capucines. He knew that he spent the best part of every evening there in ringing the bell on the target—to accomplish which feat, as every one knows, it is necessary to hit the bull's-eye. Wainwright arose early with a plan fully thought out.

"Come," he said, to Scott, "we haven't too much time before us. We must go down to Maupassant's

gallery and get some practice. You stay here and have some breakfast. I don't care to eat so early. I'll run down there and see if we can't get the gallery all to ourselves for a couple of hours."

"That will be pretty costly, won't it?" 'hazarded Scott.

"Not more than a decent coffin and all the other funeral fixings," replied Wainwright, with some little sarcasm. "If possible I want to throw those expenses on the other fellow."

Wainwright jumped into a cab, and leaving Scott to his reflections and coffee, dashed off to the Gallery Maupassant, where for upward of half an hour he remained closeted with its proprietor.

"It is agreed, then," said Wainwright, at the conclusion of the interview. "Now, then, Monsieur Maupassant, there are 250 francs down. The remainder of the 500 you get if this duel doesn't come off."

"Agreed," said the Frenchman, and he sat down and wrote at least twenty letters like the following:

"M. Maupassant requests the pleasure of your company to-morrow afternoon at three o'clock to witness the phenomenal shooting of an American gentleman, who has kindly consented to give an exhibition of his skill at that hour."

While M. Maupassant was thus engaged, Wainwright put in half an hour in the Rue du Peti Champs, where he made sundry purchases, returning with them to the gallery, where the next hour was profitably employed by him in company with an ingenious mechanic.

Meantime, as the idea grew upon the mind of M. Maupassant, he chuckled and wrote, extending his invitations until, if one-half of them were accepted, the question was, Would there be standing-room in the gallery?

"We must certainly go down and see this American shoot," said M. Ferrier's second. "You may find some of his tricks useful to you at Auvergne to-morrow."

M. Ferrier, whose courage was not of the five-o'clock-in-the-morning kind, shivered slightly, though the weather was decidedly warm.

"I wish the fellow had chosen rapiers," he muttered. "These Americans are such devils with the pistol."

It was three o'clock in the afternoon.

M. Maupassant's gallery was crowded. M. Ferrier had an excellent seat. He sat talking with his friend and second. He had been drinking somewhat to keep his courage up, and his voice could be heard all over the room. With a Frenchman's love of gossip, his second had talked freely of the meeting of the morrow.

As the American had not yet come, a dozen voices called on Ferrier to step down and get some practice, and amuse the company at the same time.

Ferrier, who was a really good shot, was not a little proud of it, and with such an audience he was not slow to avail himself of the opportunity thus afforded of displaying his skill.

Throwing off his coat, he stepped down on to the floor of the gallery, and picking up a pistol, marked two bull's-eyes in rapid succession.

His third bullet went just above, however, an inch, at least, to the right.

"Your pistol is a little heavy on the trigger, monsieur," said a voice behind him.

Turning quickly, he recognized Wainwright, who was standing quietly by, a smile full of meaning in his blue eyes, as Ferrier, quite disconcerted now, fired again and missed for the second time.

At this moment a side door in the gallery opened, and scrupulously attired, and holding in either hand a long duelling pistol of American manufacture, came Scott, who, being introduced to the audience, bowed, while M. Maupassant said:

"Monsieur Scott has kindly consented to give us an exhibition with the pistol."

Mr. Scott bowed again, and so much was the attention of the audience riveted upon him that no one noticed Wainwright, standing quietly against the wall, feeling cautiously with his hands behind him for a small, round, white object.

Mr. Scott bowed once more profoundly to his distinguished audience. Especially did he extend his salutation to that portion of the room where, pale as

death, now sat the thoroughly alarmed M. Ferrier, and who in the redoubtable American marksman had recognized the man he had insulted at the Café Ricci.

"I will now give you an imitation," said Scott, in an off-hand manner, "of a Western cowboy practising on the head of a ten penny nail at fifty paces. I will fire first at the large bull's-eye, so as to get my hand in."

He lifted the two long duelling pistols and fired from them alternately, pulling the triggers like lightning. Above the noise of the explosions could be heard the tinkling of the bell as each bullet struck fair and square in the centre.

When the smoke cleared away not a mark was visible on the white portion of the target. He had fired twelve shots and every bullet had struck the bull's-eye.

Scott turned and bowed modestly to his audience in acknowledgment of a vociferous round of applause.

As before, he glanced over to the seat occupied by M. Ferrier. The Frenchman's face looked more anxious than ever, and he exchanged hurried whispers with his second.

"I'll now show you, gentlemen," continued Scott, "a somewhat more difficult feat."

He took a pistol and threw it toward the ceiling, and catching it in his hand as it descended, pulled the trigger.

A loud ringing of the bell announced that the bullet had again struck the bull's-eye.

"Mon Dieu!" whispered Ferrier, who was now in a clammy sweat through fear. "He will drop me at the first shot."

Scott now took a small Winchester rifle from the hands of M. Maupassant, and placing it over his shoulder turned his back to the target, and faced a large mirror where the same was reflected.

Starting from the firing point and walking slowly toward the mirror, he fixed his eye steadfastly on the reflection of the target and rapidly worked the crank of the Winchester. As before, every one of the sixteen bullets struck the bull's-eye and the bell was ringing almost continuously.

A perfect hurricane of applause now shook the gallery. M. Maupassant smiled all over, and several

French gentlemen left their seats and crowded around the American, offering their congratulations at the marvellous skill which he had displayed.

Among these latter was the second of M. Ferrier.

"Of course we shall meet you, Monsieur Scott," he said, "but we trust you will spare us. Nobody has a chance who stands up before you."

He was evidently as much frightened as his principal.

Now was Wainwright's opportunity. He stepped forward and said to the little group:

"Gentlemen, can't this matter be patched up in some way? You see the kind of a shot my friend is. He hates to take life."

"I'll see what I can do," said M. Ferrier's second, eagerly and he dived over to his principal.

"Well, if you won't apologize you're an idiot. This time to-morrow you will be in the hands of the undertaker. I tell you I'll have nothing to do with this murder."

This settled poor Ferrier. Choking down his humiliation, he stammered out:

"Well, you may apologize for me if you like. It's a dreadful thing to do, but I suppose I must. I certainly can't afford to die at my age and with my prospects. But I shall never hold up my head at the club again."

Ferrier's second then tendered a handsome apology to Scott, who, with a magnanimity which provoked applause, thereupon immediately apologized also, which so affected M. Ferrier that, after the fashion of his countrymen, he would have thrown himself on Mons. Scott's breast and wept.

Recovering, he made an atttempt at a joke.

"Je vous remerci, m'sieur," he sobbed, "mais toute est perdu, maintenant, fors d' l'honneur," and he pointed despairingly to the gallery where his supremacy now was overthrown, his prestige as a marksman vanished forever.

And thus was the duel between M. Scott and M. Ferrier neatly averted by the ingenuity of M. Wainwright.

M. Maupassant was a distinct gainer by the hoax, for in addition to the splendid reputation it gave his gallery, he immediately received the remaining 250

francs from M. Wainwright. The electric bell, wire, and batteries which Wainwright had purchased that morning and with the aid of the ingenious mechanic put in such admirable working order, were also given by Wainwright to the worthy proprietor of the gallery, who instantly disposed of the whole outfit for cash, even to the little button which Wainwright had pressed so efficiently every time his friend Scott fired off his blank cartridges.

And Scott !

Well, he was the hero of Paris for at least a fortnight, and was pointed at on the boulevards as the greatest shot in the world. His popularity continued until a ballet-dancer in black skirts caught the public fancy and cut him out. And thus it is ever with "the bubble, reputation."

A strange mixture of mystery and tragedy is this experience in the life of a newspaper man, as told by E. H. Clough in the San Francisco *Argonaut*.

AN ASTRAL PROJECTION.

An impression that I was not alone grew upon me until further resistance to its force was impossible. I was not startled as I faced the silent, motionless figure in the half-gloom, for I knew it was there many minutes before I made actual observation of its presence, but the fact that I had *felt* the presence was, I must confess, somewhat disconcerting.

"Well, sir?" I remarked in a tone that must have betrayed a half-suppressed agitation. As I spoke, the form emerged from the shadow, and revealed a tall, thin-visaged young man clad in a threadbare coat reaching to the knees of travel-stained trousers so "bagged" as to induce the suspicion of a physical deformity. It was an attire eloquent of poverty and hardship, hideous and pitiable from the crown of the shapeless slouch hat to the soles of the shoes, grinning with cracks and incrusted with the mud and dust of many highways. The face of this young man, which was disfigured by a bristly beard of a dusty yellow hue, was almost livid in its pallor, and haggard as from the combined effects of hunger and sorrow. The features, however, were regular enough, and might even have been called handsome under a healthier condition and a happier environment. His eyes were dreamy and melancholy, but steady in their gaze and almost intense in their searching, appealing persistency. As I looked into them, I ceased to wonder that I should have been conscious of their singular influence when directed upon my passive will. If ever a man's soul shone through his eyes, this one certainly made itself manifest on this occasion.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he began in a low, musical voice; "but I have presumed to intrude upon you for a moment, on the assurance of a friend who told me that if I should ever wander as far as this city you

would not turn me away without, at least, a kind word. You know John Carrol?"

"Very well, indeed. You come from him?"

"Not directly. I haven't seen him for a year. I was in better circumstances then than I am at present. I have knocked about through the West from city to city, seeking what I seek here—work."

"You are a newspaper man?"

"Yes, sir; but not altogether a successful one. I don't know why, exactly, but I am generally unfortunate in my efforts—if I were an egotist I should probably say that fate had something to do with it. Perhaps it is my own fault; perhaps I am restless; I am certainly improvident; I have no business faculty."

"Perhaps you are not thoroughly adapted to the newspaper profession," I suggested, as gently as the harsh supposition would permit.

"That is possible," he replied with a sigh; "but what can I do? It has been my trade ever since I left college. I have been told that I could do good work—in a certain direction—and I have been connected at different times with some of the leading newspapers of the country; but when I seemed on the verge of a permanent competency I have failed miserably, and, as far as I can understand, unaccountably. Sometimes, I will admit, when circumstances have been otherwise agreeable, my own feelings became permeated with a repugnance for my work or for those by whom I was surrounded; to such an extent, in fact, that I found it impossible to continue in my position. On the impulse of these foolish, disastrous whims and fancies, I have 'moved on' to other places—I have been 'moving on' all my life; perhaps I shall continue to move on to the end."

"Where did you work last?" I asked.

"In Chicago."

"How long have you been in this city?"

"About an hour."

"Did you come direct from Chicago?"

"Barring side-tracks and the incidents of travel frequently interrupted by the opposition of brakemen and conductors of freight-trains, I am direct from Chicago."

"And so you came in on a brake-beam?" I said.

"No; I walked the last thirty miles. The roads were good and the railroad people didn't object."

"What is your name?" I asked.

"Nelson Tremaine." As he answered, a messenger from the foreman, demanding "some more of that Washington stuff," interrupted the conversation, and while I was numbering the pages, Tremaine seated himself at a desk beside me.

"I will do what I can for you, Mr. Tremaine," I said, as soon as the "daughter of the horse-leech" had departed. "As you will observe," I added, "I am the telegraph-editor of this concern. Mr. Scott has charge of the city department. I will speak to him and he will probably give you an assignment. Where are you staying?"

"Anywhere—nowhere," he answered, with a sad smile.

"It is late—nearly two o'clock," I said, looking at my watch; "when 'thirty' comes, we'll go and get something to eat. After that, if you won't mind, I'll take you round and introduce you to the night-clerk of the Overton; you can get a room there. In the mean time, if you are not too tired, you might help me out on this miscellaneous truck."

"Certainly." Saying which, he lighted the gas over the desk in front of which he sat, inserted his hand between two frayed buttons of his misfit-coat, and drew forth a stub of a pencil.

"Here's a hanging in Atlanta," I said, as I tossed him a sheet of the flimsy manifold-paper, upon which our local operators delighted to scrawl their illegible transcript of the incoherent cerebration of the operator at the other end of the wire, the latter, in all probability, inspired by an ambition to compass the meaning and intent of some "special correspondent," who, in "fine frenzy" and animated by a fierce neurotic fervor, had gathered his facts "on the jump," written them "on the fly," and filed them "with a rush."

"Is this a paragraph or a continuation?" Tremaine asked, after he had glanced at the dispatch.

"It's all there," I said; "give it a double head—eighteen and twenty-six—it isn't a very thrilling affair; nothing juicy or romantic about it." I observed him

as he worked. He was rapid; I saw that at once. Without hesitation and as if thoroughly familiar with this branch of the newspaper business, he supplied the omitted adverbs, conjunctions, and prepositions, and, having "headed" the telegram, passed it to me without a word. There was some "copy"-paper on the desk in front of him. He arranged this neatly and began to write. The caption he had invented for the paragraph was unique :

GONE FROM ATLANTA.

THE ABRUPT CESSATION OF THOMAS LARKIN,
LATE OF THAT CITY.

"I could have guessed a familiarity with Chicago journalism from this," I thought, as I glanced again at Tremaine. He was writing furiously. The messenger boy arrived from the telegraph office soon after with the welcome "thirty," and Tremaine's pencil was still flying over the paper. Perhaps he was at work on a "special"—a record of his adventures while journeying out of Chicago, possibly. Well, such articles were frequent enough in the newspapers, but if well written were always interesting; besides, the result would enable us to judge of this man's capacity for the work that might devolve upon him. I had conceived a peculiar interest in this stranger, so frankly appreciative of his own lack of energy and the powers of concentration, continuity, and tenacity so necessary to the success of every newspaper man. Moreover, I had every reason to believe that he was penniless; he might even be hungry. All this appealed irresistibly to my sympathies. Having finished my work, I sought Mr. Scott and asked him if he could give Tremaine an assignment, urging him with a recital of the circumstances and my own suppositions, theories, and confidence in my protégé's ability.

"The assignment is all right," said Scott; "but unless he is a first-class man, I can't promise anything permanent; we've got a pretty big crowd of special-detail men, and, of course, it wouldn't be exactly fair to force a new man in just now. I'll tell you what I'll do, though," Scott continued; "I intended to send Hastings to interview that faith-cure crowd in Bethany.

I'll put Tremaine on to that and give Hastings the Sanderson murder—he knows the people and circumstances. Tell Tremaine to report at eleven o'clock."

I returned to my own room and found my new friend still at work. He did not seem to notice my presence. As I watched him, I noticed that the movement of his hand, as it guided the pencil across the paper, was spasmodic, but without pause; sometimes swift, sometimes slow, but always moving—a movement uninterrupted by lack of ideas, but a movement that I thought somewhat mechanical. The light from the gas-jet shone upon his pale, pinched face. The features were set as with a mental purpose, and *his eyes were closed.* Suddenly he stopped; a convulsive tremor shook his body; his hand, grasping the pencil, trembled violently and stretched away to the right, clear of the desk; the fingers relaxed, the pencil dropped to the floor, and the writer sank, as if completely exhausted, in a heap in his chair.

"Come," I said, "you're not strong enough for work to-night. We'll go out and get something to eat. Then you must get some sleep."

Tremaine did not answer, but sat huddled there like a dead man. I put on my overcoat and hat and, approaching him, laid my hand on his shoulder.

"Come," I repeated; "let us go." He opened his eyes, but there was no "speculation" in his glance. He arose, as if impelled by my will rather than by any volition of his own, and followed me like a sleep-walker into the street. At the restaurant he roused somewhat and ate with apparent relish, induced, probably, by a long fast. But his thoughts seemed far away. When I told him that he could report at the office at eleven o'clock, he merely answered, "All right," and looked at his left hand, the fingers of which he opened and shut slowly, as if performing a curious experiment in which he was deeply interested. He was tired and sleepy, I thought. At the hotel I became responsible for his room-rent, and hurried to my own home, impressed with the idea that I had found a new kind of crank. I dreamed of him that morning. He came to me and told me that he was going away. A smile flickered about his thin lips and his haunting eyes glimpsed

merrily, as if he had heard good news and was glad to begin his journey. In my dream-thoughts I considered it unnecessary to ask him why he was going, or where, and I certainly felt no regret at his departure. Then his form gradually melted away—so gradually that, at the last, his smile, as shadowy as the faintest color in a clouded prism, was still lingering in my fantasy when I awoke.

I reached the office that afternoon about two o'clock. As I entered my den, Tremaine's manuscript caught my eye. I picked up a sheet and read:

"Bragdon, his arms pinioned, walked from his cell to the scaffold as if his destination were a matter of indifference to him." Then followed a circumstantial account of the execution—a continuation of the dispatch from Atlanta which Tremaine had edited the night before. The story was told in a peculiar way; it was full of action—nervous and dramatic. I was particularly struck with his assumption that "after the face of the murderer had been blotted out by the black cap from the fixed gaze of the mob beneath the scaffold, the man about to be hanged saw, 'as through a glass darkly,' his last of earth; the sunlight a fuliginous yellow, the foliage of the magnolia close by a sooty green, the faces at his feet distorted and dusky, but plain enough to his view during the eternity of his waiting for the clutch of death." Throughout the article names were mentioned, circumstances minutely detailed, incidents recounted, and "local color" employed to render the story as plausible as if the writer had been actually present. I laid the manuscript away in my desk, intending to compare the account with the reports in the Atlanta papers when they should arrive. I had heard much of "unconscious cerebration;" I was curious to ascertain if this was a case in point.

I did not see Tremaine that day, but I heard from him through Scott, who was enthusiastic in praise of the work he had already performed.

"The account of the faith-cure séance reads like a page from Dickens," he concluded.

"What have you done with him?" I asked.

"Sent him to the slugging-match," Scott replied; "gave him *carte blanche* and sent Downey with him

to post him on the crowd. We'll get a dandy report."

I read both of Tremaine's reports on the following morning, and my opinion coincided with that of Scott. The work was far above the average. As a result, Tremaine was sought out by the "old man," heartily complimented, and placed on the regular staff at a fair salary.

What I am now about to narrate is so incredible, so extraordinary, so contrary to all accepted theories of natural events contingent upon natural causes, that I do not expect the ordinary philosopher or the absolute materialist to give it even the courteous consideration due to the relation of an honest chronicler. Let the sciolists sneer, however, and let intellectual egoists frown if it so please them—there are a few things in heaven and earth that are not dreamed of in their superficial philosophy, and the complicated action of the human mind is one of them.

During the days immediately following his first successes I saw little of Tremaine. They kept him very busy, and his conscientious adherence to his duty would not permit him to squander a single moment of his employer's time. The casual glimpses that I caught as the young man came and went through the city department were sufficient to show that he had assumed the attire of a gentleman. He was clean-shaven, his coat was of fashionable cut, his linen was spotless, his old hat, greasy and dirt-begrimed, had been discarded for a new one—a shiftless, disheartened, wandering Bohemian no longer, Nelson Tremaine had asserted his manhood and was a credit to himself and the newspaper. Scott told me that he was scrupulously exact in all his work, but exceedingly reserved toward those with whom he was brought in contact. He was courteous enough toward his fellow-reporters, but sedulously avoided their friendly companionship.

In due time the Atlanta papers containing the account of the execution arrived. I opened them eagerly, vaguely convinced that I would find at least a reportorial resemblance between Tremaine's account and that of the local newspaper men. I was certainly not prepared for the absolute truth of detail, the realism, the

accuracy of circumstance, which this comparison proved to exist. The only difference was the glaring superiority of Tremaine's article. Soon after this he strolled into my den and thanked me cordially for my efforts on his behalf.

"How long has it been since you were in Atlanta?" I asked him, while narrowly observing the expression of his face.

"I have never been there," he answered. He betrayed not the least surprise at my question; neither did he exhibit the slightest indication that he suspected a reference, on my part, to his "report" of the hanging. If his lack of interest was genuine, I was forced to the conclusion that Tremaine had written that article while totally unconscious—that he had dreamed his story and that the palpable result there in my desk was the record of his dream.

It became his habit, after this, to spend an hour or two with me after his night's work, usually accompanying me to luncheon at midnight and then retiring to his room. He had left the hotel and was living in the suburbs. As our friendship grew more confidential, I gradually learned from him something of his history. The only son of a rich New York merchant, motherless from his early youth, he had been educated at Harvard, and on his graduation, in opposition to his father's wishes, he had entered the newspaper business. His father's failure and subsequent death left him without ties of close kindred and virtually penniless. Since that time, he had shifted from place to place without settled purpose, content to acquire only sufficient for his immediate needs, almost without ambition or object in life—sometimes in easy circumstances, but oftener reduced to the barest necessities.

"I am a dreamer," he said one night; "I am like Cassius—I think too much—I am 'lean and hungry,' too, sometimes. But what's the odds? 'The dreamer lives forever, but the toiler dies in a day,'" he quoted, with a laugh. "So, you see, I am not so badly off, after all." There were hints of a love-affair in his narrative, but they were too meagre to invite inquiry. On one occasion, after a long silence between us, he addressed me with sudden fervor, tinged, I thought, with anxiety:

"What do you think of woman's friendship?" he asked.

"It is the best boon that can be bestowed on a man," I replied.

"Better than love?"

"It is the basis of true love." He was silent for a moment, and then said, in a half-musing tone:

"I think so, too. If there is such a thing as fidelity in a woman's friendship, it is possible that I may some day have a home—somewhere."

Everybody remembers the Randolph divorce case. It was the absorbing sensation for weeks. The details were as interesting as one of Gaboriau's detective stories and as piquant as a chapter out of Daudet. The first intimation of the scandal that came to me was a brief dispatch from our New York correspondent, received late at night—too late for a return telegram asking for fuller particulars. Only the names of the principals and two co-respondents, with an unsatisfactory "cause of complaint" and a promise of "interesting particulars at the trial," comprised the "meat" of the dispatch. I knew that it was "a good story." I knew, too, that the New York papers would be full of it that morning. Our correspondent had simply neglected his duty. Thoroughly annoyed, I turned to Tremaine, who was reading an exchange at the desk where he usually sat when waiting for me.

"Do you know New York?" I asked.

"Pretty well," he answered.

"Well, pad that dispatch for me—maybe you know something about those people—they belong to the exclusives of the Four Hundred—Patriarchs, I believe," saying which, I handed him the telegram sheet. He looked at it, recognized the names with an exclamation of surprise, and without a word went to work. I watched him with intense curiosity. His action was the same as that which characterized his extraordinary performance on the night when he "reported" the hanging; the same spasmodic, mechanical movement of the hand; the same seemingly unconscious mental effort. And when, after half an hour's work, the pencil made its final flourish and fell to the floor, the same stupor overpowered him, and he sat huddled in his chair as

if deprived of all his vitality. I gathered the "copy" and read it. It was a clear, concise statement of facts apparently covering every prominent or more interesting feature of the case. For a moment, I hesitated about printing it. The people involved all occupied high positions in the social world, and I had no absolute proof that the alleged facts in Tremaine's account had the least foundation in truth. I know that newspaper men more conscientious than I am regarding the publication of doubtful news, however interesting or important, will blame me for my action in this instance, but I had such confidence in what I had come to consider Tremaine's "second sight," that I could not resist the opportunity thus afforded of "scooping" our contemporaries. I sent the copy to the printer. As on the previous occasion, Tremaine gave no evidence of knowledge of what he had done. He did not even refer to the telegram I had given him.

The publication of the "Randolph Case" created the sensation I had anticipated. The "old man" made pleased inquiries, and was satisfied with my explanation that the story came through a special correspondent. Until the arrival of the New York papers, however, I was perturbed, uneasy, anxious; I could scarcely believe my senses when I read them, so closely did Tremaine's "clairvoyant" report coincide with the actual facts as published in the metropolitan journals. After this, I did not hesitate to "use" Tremaine on my "specials;" European news, African exploration, Congressional affairs, Parliamentary complications, and other important happenings in every quarter of the globe were "padded" by him into the freshest and "very latest" news. The local papers fumed and accused us of "manufacturing" the news, but subsequent confirmation invariably vindicated our facts. The people in the telegraph office wondered, and the old man rubbed his hands with glee, always accepting my romance about "our special correspondents."

One night I tossed a sheet to Tremaine, containing a paragraph announcing a Baltimore wedding in high life—the marriage of Lieutenant George R. Watson, of the United States Navy, and Miss Edith Blanchard, the youngest daughter of Lemuel Blanchard, a million-

aire iron manufacturer. That was all. As the manifold fluttered over Tremaine's desk, he caught it with a flourish, and, holding it aloft, said, in a merrier tone than I had ever heard him utter:

"What is it? Is the Akhoond of Swat dead again, or has Prince Bacigalupi of Montenegro broken out in a new place?" He smoothed the tissue on a white surface, the better to read it, and at the first glance sprang from his seat with a low, moaning cry pitiable to hear. It was more like the gasp of a stricken animal than the utterance of a man. I started toward him expecting to see him fall, but before I could reach him a dull, hard look came into his face, and he dropped heavily into his chair. His pencil fairly flew over the paper as he "padded" the dispatch. He worked an hour; his hand made that final flourish; the pencil fell to the floor and the writer sank back exhasted. Slowly he recovered himself. A superhuman power seemed to be urging him back to consciousness. His features became once more mobile with human expression—but it was the expression of terror, remorse, or agony. Eagerly he read the first lines of what he had written; then he read the original dispatch. With a groan he staggered to his feet.

"My God! it is true," he moaned, and reeled out into the night, leaving me amazed and regretful that I had imposed this last terrible task upon him.

Tremaine's account of that wedding was one of the most brilliant articles I have ever seen in a daily newspaper. It was a poem—an epithalamium; one could almost hear the joy-bells and breathe the perfume of the orange-blossoms. This record, so strangely made, of an event that filled hearts with happiness and destroyed the hope of one man, is in my possession today. It has never been published.

That was a terrible night in the world's history. Murder stalked abroad and suicide lurked in the solitudes; misery emerged from its kennel to make its hopeless moan to mankind; skeletons came forth from the closets of blasted homes to sit gibbering at millions of hearth-stones in the morning; theft, outrage, and nameless crimes were dragged from their secret lairs; the wires shuddered with the awful burden of their hor-

rors, and the midnight grew darker—in the midst walked the pestilence of vice companioning with the leprosy of immorality.

"Tremaine is at the telephone and wants you." It was Scott who delivered this message to me about one o'clock in the morning. I entered the closet where the telephone hung and rang the bell.

"Hello!" I cried. The answer came low and faint —a whisper, but plainly recognizable as the voice of Tremaine.

"What do you want?" I asked.

"There is a suicide at 236 Merivale Avenue—send a man," whispered Tremaine.

"Why can't you attend to it? We are very busy here just now."

"It is impossible; but I will be there when the reporter comes."

"Where are you now?" I asked. There was no reply. I repeated the question, but only the humming of the wires gave answer, like a murmurous echo. Then somebody "cut in" on my wire, and impatiently I rang up "central."

"Where was that call from?" I asked.

"You have had no call within fifteen minutes," was answered from the central office. I insisted that there had been a call and that I had just talked with one of our reporters over that wire. I wanted to know where he was. But "central" was positive that I was mistaken, and I left the telephone angry and bewildered.

"Suicide at 236 Merivale Avenue," I said to Scott; "send a man over right away. He will find Tremaine there." Scott sent Hastings, who returned in half an hour pale, panting, and excited.

"Did you get it?" asked Scott.

"Yes."

"Much of a case?"

"Yes."

"Did you see Tremaine?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Where is he?"

"At the morgue."

This story of Oriental treachery, passion, and revenge, full of vigorous action and culminating in a most dramatic climax, is from the pages of the *Cornhill Magazine*.

THE LOSS OF THE EMIR.

CHAPTER I.

FORTUNATELY, Nature had endowed Murad Tcherkess with an exceptional share of that stolid patience which is the common heritage and often the only virtue of the Orientals. More than six months ago he had arrived in Stambool with his band of Circassian refugees, received a promise of an immediate grant of land in Syria, and had begun to attend day by day in the vestibule of the Ministry of the Interior, in expectation that the pledge would be ratified. But even if his Majesty had been disposed to hasten the tardy wheels of formality, his Majesty's subordinates had a very real interest in clogging the same; for had not the Circassians in their possession a considerable sum of money, realized on the sale of their horses and household effects before they left Batoom; and were they not asking a very particular favor of the padisha? The interpreters, clerks, and even higher officials in Constantinople had not been paid in full since heaven knows when, and yet, like other men, they must live. So it was not to be marvelled at that, with here a bribe and there a backsheesh, poor Murad and his followers found their small store of capital rapidly approaching the vanishing point, and the chance of being able to settle on the promised allotment with anything more than their clothes and arms becoming daily more remote. They could have held their own well enough had it been a matter of blows, or even of ordinary lying; but against this impenetrable wall of corrupt officialism, so unlike in its complexity anything that they had ever combated in their own mountains, the Circassians struggled in vain: and as hope became further and further deferred, murmurs arose from many of the band lounging in the dirty coffee-shops of Stambool,

or squatting about the government offices and court-yards of mosques; and it began to be whispered that they had been lured by false promises, and when no longer able to bribe, would be left to starve in the bazaars. The Turks gave them a wide berth, for they always hate and fear the active and acute Circassian, as he in turn despises and distrusts those whom, in the day of adversity, he must acknowledge as his masters; and as the groups of tall, fair men became daily more and more noisy, and knives were displayed and pistols examined, it is possible that advice reached headquarters that it would be well to get the Tcherkess out of the city before they became desperate men.

So it came about that one day, when Murad had waited with his faithful henchmen but an hour or two in the whitewashed corridor of the ministry, sullenly revolving the expediency of taking to the hills, he was startled from his reverie by the unexpected sound of his own name, bellowed down the crowded passage by slipshod orderlies. Rising with a fitting sense of haste, and followed by the two young men whose attendance his position as tribal chieftain demanded, he passed, with measured step and head erect, between the lines of filthy supplicants, gathered from the four winds of heaven, and waiting, like himself, day by day upon the favor of the minister. A strange assemblage, the scourings of two continents: Christian traders, Greek or Armenian, capped with the fez and clad in holland clothes, which looked, like the greasy linen protruding from the sleeves, as if they did equal duty night and day; in contrast to these, smart, if treacherous, Montenegrins and Albanians, in all the bravery of crimson cloth, braided gaiters, and silver-mounted arms; Tartar and Georgian wagoners from Central Asia; high-capped Persians, with sleek hair and refined features; little Zeibecs and black-browed, black-haired Kurds. But the tall Circassian was a king among these men—morally and physically their superior, both in virtue of his race characteristics and of his education. For he was no barbarian; he had served as an officer of irregulars under the Russian flag and seen something of men and cities; and to manners which would not have disgraced a drawing-room, he added an energy and an

acuteness which were much in excess of those possessed by the miserable little Turk to whose presence, after various delays, he was introduced, and to whom he salaamed low, yet without that servile dwelling on the various motions of the salute at which a member of any other nation, similarly placed and similarly expectant, would certainly have aimed.

The interview was only prolonged by the customary circumlocutions, and Murad was soon informed that his Imperial Majesty (whom Allah bless!) had assigned to him and his people a tract of land in the province of Aleppo, formerly the holding of certain Arabs, who had been dispossessed for turbulence and non-payment of taxes. He was further told that a steamer was due to depart in five days' time for Iskenderûn, by which he might rid Stambool of his presence.

Back down the corridor and out into the streets strode Murad, with a brisker step and a lighter heart than had been his for many a long day past. Like all children of the mountains, he loathed the close air and the spurious civilization of the great city, and had felt very really and very deeply the loss of his home and the severance of the ties which bound him to the Caucasian village where his people had lived for many a generation. The Circassian is essentially feudal; in him his tribe and its territory are, all in all, a little world which takes no account of the greater; and to be expelled by men of alien race and alien creed—to be expelled, moreover, for no other fault than that he was more powerful than his neighbors—had affected Murad more bitterly than his outward demeanor had ever revealed. Upon this had supervened the weary detention among new masters, whom his energetic nature heartily despised, and any means of escape had appeared equally grateful.

So it was with something of reinstated dignity that he marched down the bazaars, with his henchmen at his heels, and turned into a squalid khan in the slimiest quarter of Stambool. Leaving his followers to communicate the blessed news to a little crowd of long-coated, high-capped men, who had risen at their chief's entrance, he strode up the ladder to the crazy balcony, and, stopping before the closed door of a room, shouted

two or three words in his own language. A response came from within, and opening, he passed into a group of unveiled females, one of whom, evidently his daughter, rose to meet him, surprised by the unwonted animation of his manner.

Magnificent examples of their magnificent race were these two standing thus face to face. The father, well over six feet in height, flat-backed and broad-chested, with the regular features, deep gray eyes, and brown hair and slightly-curling beard which distinguish his kind from the squat Tartars and black-haired Persians. The daughter was of singular beauty even among her own people: five inches less than her father, his splendid proportions had been preserved but contracted in hers; her features, regular as a Greek's, were not blanched like those of the hot-house flower which blooms in Constantinople harems, but delicately bronzed by unveiled exposure to her native sun, while her eyes, more blue than her father's, were innocent of henna. Wavy masses of brown hair escaped from the coiled strands, and framed the beautiful oval face which looked up at Murad's while her hands took his.

"Why comes my father so early from the Konak today?" she asked. "It is only the fourth hour."

"What would my sweet Pembé desire most that Allah should give her this day?" he interrupted, caressing the soft hair with his great hand; "what more than sweetmeats or other pleasant things?"

The girl looked up eagerly.

"If Allah would grant that we might return!" She stopped and added sadly: "But that will never be. Next to that I would be released from this prison of walls, where I see no mountains or bright fields, and where the men's hearts are black."

She paused, and looked into his eyes. For a moment he said nothing, enjoying her expectancy; then, drawing her close to him, he said:

"My daughter, it is even so! This very morning has the padisha (whom Allah, the compassionating, bless!) granted us land at last, where we may live in peace among our own people;" and, calling for coffee, he sat down on the divan, and told the delighted women of the situation and circumstances of their home that was

to be. Presently he set them about making preparations for the departure, and rose to rejoin his henchmen below, staying a moment to caress his daughter.

"And so thou art glad to leave this wonderful city, my little bird?" he said.

"Glad as the prisoner to be free," she replied; "for these Turks are bad men, and such as would do evil things. Shall I tell my lord? Yesterday, toward sunset, when I and Dadu were upon the bridge, a slave spoke to us, and making pretence that thou hadst sent him, led us a little way to the stairs, where was a boat with men; and they seized us by the arms, and would have dragged us into the boat, but we cried aloud and struggled, and, frightened, they let us go and rowed away. But we ran back here, and were ashamed to tell it to you till now."

Murad's eyes grew hard, and a curse rose to his lips; but he checked it and said:

"Praise be to Allah, we shall have no more of this. Thou must not quit the khan, my pretty one, and in five days thou shalt see no more of these men."

He opened the door, and as he stepped out on to the balcony a black slave, who had been talking with the delighted Circassians below, rose, stretched himself, and slouched down the street in the direction of the Galata Bridge.

CHAPTER II.

Seven days later the steamship *Emir* was creaking and groaning through the lumpy seas outside the Dardanelles at the modest rate of about five knots an hour. Never did a crankier old tub carry a cargo of Baku petroleum and a full complement of deck-passengers; and only from a Levantine port would she have been allowed to put to sea at all. The lettering on her wheel, as well as her general build, showed that she had been turned out many years before on the Clyde; but whoever her first owners may have been, she had long plied as a cargo-boat between Constantinople, the Black Sea, and the Anatolian ports, gradually losing any vestige of paint she ever possessed, and acquiring in its stead a general aspect of mottled shabbiness and

incalculable stores of filth and vermin. Whether her funnel had originally been black or white, or both, or neither, it was now past human power to determine; and not a rope or a chain in the ship looked capable of sustaining the slightest strain. The few men who formed her crew were Greeks to a man, with the single exception of a negro cook of villanous aspect. The officers were Mussulmans; the captain a tall, determined ruffian, heavily mustached and low-browed, with shifty eyes and full, sensuous mouth, but, to judge from his dress and appearance, of a better class than might have been expected on board the *Emir*.

The passengers were Murad Tcherkess and his band, on their way, under contract, to the port of Iskenderûn, where the *Emir* was to unload her cargo of petroleum. A few of the Circassians were leaning over the ship's bulwarks, others were stretched on the deck and hatches asleep or sea-sick; but the majority squatted together in little groups, smoking, playing cards, eating, or chattering, while the children tumbled about on quilts spread out amidships. On the port side of the deck-house a space was reserved for the women, and a ragged awning was stretched to the ship's side. The passage through the Sea of Marmora had been enlivened by a squall, from whose effects the outer sea was still heaving, and poor Pembé and her companions had scarcely held up their heads since embarking at ten o'clock the evening before, and they lay on their quilts feeling that life was but a bubble after all. But as the sun sank lower the sea heaved ever less high, and the old *Emir* (which would have rolled somewhat on the veriest duck-pond) began to swing less outrageously; so it chanced that Pembé at last opened her eyes, looking dreamily up to the ragged awning above, and suddenly became aware of a man standing on the quarter-deck and looking down through the rents of the canvas. With a quick gesture she drew her veil over her mouth; another indignant look, and, springing up, she clutched the prostrate Dadu.

"Do you see him?" she whispered quickly—"the man who was in the boat that evening at the bridge. What is he doing here? why does he look at us? Look! there he is," she added, pointing to a figure

now beating a retreat forward; "do you recognize him?"

Dadu looked a moment and then assented—it was the captain.

Aroused by Pembé's exclamation, other women huddled round and asked what ailed her; but the girl, half-ashamed of her fright and of its cause, evaded their questions and waited till the evening meal should be over to tell her father. The herculean Circassian made little of the matter.

"True," said he, "he would dearly love to possess himself of thee; but what can he and his score of infidels do against a hundred men who would die for thee? I knew that black devil of a cook at once for the man who hung about the khan in Stambool; and doubtless he was set to learn our intentions, while this swine arranged with these thieving scribes that he should convey us, in the hope that he might find some way to approach thee. But fear not; he knew not the Tcherkess, and no harm can touch thee before we reach Iskenderûn; and then"—he touched the silver-chased hilt of his long knife—"we may teach him, ere we depart, not to try again with Tcherkess women what he has already attempted to do to thee." He rose and looked over the ship's side; the swelling surface, no longer broken or variegated with foamy patches, heaved gently and reflected the moonlight from its oily surface. The *Emir* was passing between Tenedos and the mainland of the Troad, and as poor Murad's eyes wandered over the low ground to the distant peaks of Ida, capped with white, moonlit mists, he heaved a sigh, not for the memories of that historic coast, but for the hoary crags and deep green valleys that he had left in his beloved Caucasus. A soft hand was laid on his, and Pembé, following the direction of his eyes, divined his thoughts. "Courage!" she whispered; "we shall find other hills as fair, other pastures like those we have left. A little more, and we shall cease to remember what has been." But Murad seemed only half-comforted, and, passing his hand lovingly over her hair, bade her good-night, and assigned places near the women's quarter to his most faithful henchmen, with whom he purposed to watch, turn by turn, through the hot summer night.

From the bridge Yacub Bey, the captain, watched these preparations, as he had watched the previous conference. A renegade Greek of Samos, he combined the energy and falseness of the race of his birth with the sensuousness and cruelty of the religion of his adoption. From the first moment that he had set eyes on the beautiful Circassian girl in the streets of Stambool, he had determined to possess her; but the attempt made a fortnight later had failed, as we have seen, and the dreaded Tcherkess were guardians too vigilant for the attempt at seizure to be repeated. It was, therefore, as Murad had guessed, in the vague hope of finding some way to Pembé that he had offered to convey the troublesome Tcherkess to Iskenderûn in the cranky tub which he owned, and which had been loading for that port for the last month in the Golden Horn. Many things might happen between the Dardanelles and the first sight of the peaks of Amanus, and no one would ask questions about a body of refugee Tcherkess. Was not the *Emir*, too, insured in Greek offices fully up to her rather problematical value? So Yacub stood on the bridge, looking back at the lights of Tenedos, or ahead to the mist-wreaths upon the Lesbian hills, and thought over many plans.

But the night passed, and the next day brought no incident, save an occasional break-down of the crazy engines or a wrangle over a game of cards. The *Emir* ploughed her laborious course through a labyrinth of islands and islets lifting out of the blue sea, their steep shores covered with scrub or smiling vineyards, while here and there white villages nestled far up in the curves of the mountain walls. At Scio, rent and crumbling yet from the great earthquake, the *Emir* stopped to take in water and load more cargo; but no passengers came on board, and toward evening the screw was once more induced to revolve, and the steamer panted out of the road and headed for the western point of Samos. Nothing happened either that night or next day, nor again for a night and day after leaving Rhodes to confirm the suspicion of Pembé and her father, and it became evident to them that the captain had been deterred by the strict watch maintained, and that nothing was to be apprehended until they should

reach Iskenderûn; thereafter Murad had his own views as to a method of precluding all danger when the *Emir* had been a few hours in port. Nay, Yacub seemed anxious to conciliate the suspicious Tcherkess, made no difficulties as to their accommodation, had the cafedji beaten for extortion, and when a little affair of knives occurred between the cook and a Circassian boy who persisted in singing when the negro wished to slumber, he even put that sable functionary in irons and promised to bring him before the cadi at Iskenderûn. So the day drew to a close, and as the sun was sinking behind the towering peak of Climax and the *Emir* headed across the Bay of Adalia, the captain descended from the bridge and, sending for a case-bottle of mastica, invited Murad and his henchmen to drink a bout with him. The good Moslem seldom resists the attraction of that insidious fluid—supposed, by a pleasing fiction, to be excluded from the prophet's prohibition—and presently the little glasses were filled and refilled, Yacub mixing his spirit with water, after the fashion of Smyrna, the Tcherkess drinking it straight. The latter had been drinking more or less all day at their own expense, and soon passed from noisiness to quarrelling, and from quarrelling to drowsiness, until one after another coiled himself up and fell asleep in his appointed station, or wherever the drowsy god attacked him. It was a hot, heavy night, such as Levantines know too well when the sirocco blows in July; the very moonbeams seemed to diffuse a sickly warmth, and the moon herself to tremble in the haze. Placid as oil stretched the sea toward the distant peaks of Karamania, and no sound broke the dense stillness except the panting of the engines and the wash of the screw. Midnight was past, but every now and again a barefooted sailor passed along the gangway from bridge to quarter-deck, carrying in his arms a bundle which might have been canvas or tackle, but which was deposited carefully in one or other of the two boats swinging aft on the davits. Presently more figures creep up, and the boats are lowered noiselessly and made fast, while dark figures swarm down to man the thwarts. One looses her mooring-rope and passes rapidly away astern; the other still drifts along under

the port side with three men in her, while two others step cautiously over the prostrate figures on the deck; they stop, stoop down, and, quick as light, thrust something into the mouth of a sleeping woman, and, seizing her, literally drop her over the ship's side into the boatmen's arms below, her two captors swarming down into the boat.

But, slight as the noise was, it had aroused the nearest women, and, dazed and hardly conscious of what had occurred, they started to their feet.

An instant later, the cry of alarm awakened Murad and a score of tall figures, who rushed to the side where the frightened women stood, only to see the second boat dropping fast astern on the moonlit waters. Twenty pistol-shots rang out on the night air, but their effect could not be discerned, and the steamer's way soon carried the kidnappers out of sight. Frantic with impotent fury, Murad and his henchmen rushed forward to the bridge, the engine-room, the poop—all were deserted. Nowhere was the captain to be seen, nowhere a single officer or sailor; without engineer or steersman, the *Emir* was steaming steadily ahead, at the mercy of the currents, without one single man on board who knew how to manage her!

Murad came back from his search with white face and set teeth, unable even to utter the torrent of imprecation which most Moslems would have vented for a lesser evil. The boats were all gone; the *Emir* steamed whither she would, and no one knew even how to stop her engines. He felt so utterly powerless, so hopeless of resisting or averting fate, that he had hardly begun to think of avenging Pembé's loss on those who had been sent to guard her, when a new and terrible danger revealed itself. Through the cracks of the hatches of the forehold curled up, faster and thicker, wreaths of smoke, and from the crowd of men and women huddled on the deck rose one cry of "Fire!" Murad and his men rushed to the hatches and, in their ignorance, tore them up; but the volume of flame and smoke which escaped showed that the cargo of petroleum was already on fire, and that no human efforts could extinguish the conflagration. This, then, was Yacub's plan! For this the scoundrel had insured his

crazy tub, and two hundred lives were to be sacrificed without pity to further the ends of lust and greed.

Aft rushed the terrified throng, pursued by the smoke and sparks, while the flames leaped out of the seething furnace of the hold and lapped at everything within reach. Presently the partition is burnt through, and the fire rushes into the engine-room. The main hold must soon be reached, and its inflammable contents will blaze like one beacon to heaven. In despair, women flung their children into the sea, and sprang in themselves. Some seized a cask or a spar and jumped overboard in the vague hope of reaching a dark coast which showed scarcely a mile ahead. Others, maddened by terror, rushed back within the reach of the flames. The engines had now become red-hot and had stopped, and the flaming wreck was drifting shoreward with the current, carrying still a few living creatures crouching behind the deck-house, but already scorched with the awful heat. But now the flames are in the main hold. For a moment, the casing of the petroleum resists them; then, as box after box is burned through, the column of flame rises higher and higher, and the last of the passengers, hastily seizing anything which comes to hand, fling themselves over the stern, some to sink, some, like Murad and one or two more, to swim or cling, half-insensible, to their spars or staves. Hissing in, the water fills the fragments of the ship, now outlined in fire and sending up a dense, spreading column of black oil-smoke, lighted below as from a furnace.

* * * * * *

Still clinging to his spar, and still alive, Murad was washed up by the current in a little bay near the north-west point of Cyprus. The sun was already high when he was aroused from his stupor, and found himself the centre of a group of five or six Cypriot shepherds, who had (perhaps luckily) confined their attempts at restoring animation to the simple process of sitting round the prostrate man. Murad raised himself on his hands with that dull feeling of bewilderment and oblivion which succeeds unconsciousness, looked dizzily round on the leathery visages of the Cypriots whispering together, and on the scrub-covered cliffs, and on the

burnished sea. One by one the events of the night reformed themselves in his brain—the abduction of his daughter, the fire, the leap into the reddened sea; and as the divergent incidents once more converged to form a vivid memory, he started from his lethargy with an oath, and began to question in Turkish the stolid shepherds who still regarded him with patient curiosity. What had they seen? Where was the ship? How had he come to shore? Had any one else been saved? The peasants replied (as is the Cypriot's wont with a stranger) by telling the story to each other, and alluding to their interlocutor in the third person, as if he were a hundred miles away; but Murad soon gathered from the indirect narration that the flaming ship had attracted their notice as they lay out on the hills; that they had called to each other, and made their way down to the shore, and, in searching in the different caves for wreckage, they had chanced on himself lying senseless on the sand. Of the ship they had seen no more, and she had probably filled and foundered. But, asked Murad again, had no boat, no other man or woman been seen? "Ay," said one, addressing his neighbor, "you and I saw a little boat indeed come into Exarchos Bay, and there seemed to be many men and women in it; but as we watched it struck something and there was a great shout, and the sea came over, and we saw no more of it; only two men seemed to get clear, and they swam, and we helped them to shore; but the rest remained in the sea." "What faces had these men?" interrupted Murad. "One was a giaour, but the other was a Mussulman, though his face was also the face of a giaour; he seemed to be a greater man than the first; perhaps he was the captain." A few more questions, asked in a passionless voice, as to his face, hair, and clothes, and Murad knew that the merciful sea, which had swallowed up all that was dear to him in life, had resigned to his vengeance the chief actor in the villanous tragedy enacted the night before.

As one who speaks in sleep he continued his interrogation of the shepherds: What became of the man? They had led him to the summer huts about the threshing-floors a mile or two eastward, and left him with one Hadji Panagi, while they returned to the shore. Where

lay the path to the house? asked Murad. Round the bluff, said the youngest shepherd; but the man had agreed with the Hadji for mules, and he had heard him say that as soon as mid-day was well past he must set out for the chief village of the district, and the Hadji would go with him to receive the money for the mules and to show the path. The Tcherkess might meet him on the way, for he must pass again along the foot of the hills only a quarter of a mile from the shore, and now it was already one hour after mid-day.

Murad stretched out his hand for a shepherd's water-bottle, and drank long and deep; then, rising without a word, strode out of the circle and westward along the beach. The Cypriots watched him with as much curiosity as they could muster, but did not attempt to follow; he was only a Tcherkess, and had nothing on him of value, and was best left alone; so, slinging on their wallets again, they lounged listlessly in different directions to regain their sleeping goats.

Through the deep sand walked, or almost ran, Murad, until he reached the western limit of the little cove, and, espying a gully leading into the cliff, struck up it to the rocky plain, thickset with impenetrable evergreens and flowering thorns from the beach to the hills. Through this stunted forest he forced his laborious way, now tripping over fallen firs, now torn by far-reaching thorns, until, close under the hills, he emerged upon the only track which leads down this wild coast. He paused a moment, and scrutinized the sand which here and there covered the path, seeming to look for traces of recent travellers; but there were none, and he hurried along westward, stopping only wherever rocks overhung the track or it descended a precipitous gully. At such points he would examine the neighborhood, but always hurried on again, to stop once more a few hundred yards on.

One spot at last seemed to engage his attention; a torrent descending from the central ridge had cleft for itself a tortuous ravine through the gray limestone rock; from the almost perpendicular walls jutted here and there a crag, and nothing but a few clinging bushes relieved the blistered nakedness of the gorge. Over shingle that it had brought down, and through bowlders

rolled into its bed from above, flowed a stream—no longer with the impetuous volume of winter, but trickling painfully, here caught and pinioned by bowlders which it would have dashed aside six months ago, there gurgling down a rocky steep. Down the eastern cliff the path sloped obliquely, and Murad followed it to the torrent-bed, and stooped to drink at one of the many pools; but the water was brackish and heated by the July sun, and the Circassian rose unrefreshed to continue his way up the western cliff. The path was a mere track cut out of the side and banked up here and there with bowlders where the winter runlets fell across; itself a water-course in winter, it was seamed and broken to an extent which would have rendered it impracticable to any beast of burden but a mule; and, just before reaching the brow, it turned sharply to the left round a low crag, and so debouched on the plateau again.

Once on the top, Murad paused for a moment to look back across the gorge and along the white path, whose course among the stunted firs and thorns could be seen for nearly a mile beyond, and then, creeping into the bushes to the north, followed for a few feet the edge of the cliff until he was some eight or ten feet above the path. From a traveller, either descending or ascending the sides of the ravine, he was wholly screened by the dense undergrowth, but could himself peer through the brake and see the path by which he had come. The spot seemed to please him, and stealthily he stretched himself out on the rock, and, resting his chin on his folded arms, looked fixedly eastward.

It was hardly the third hour after mid-day, and the world seemed spent and dying; the light breeze, growing ever lighter with the declining sun, wafted no cooling airs to Murad's face, but rather a scorching breath, charged with the heat of the blistered rocks over which it had passed; even the glittering sea gave no rest to the wearied eye, but seemed to burn no less than the great naked masses of Taurus, seen above a tremulous mirage-haze on the opposite coast. No human habitation, no grazing flocks, dispelled the illusion that the world was lying in a trance; the very lizards straddling

on the rocks lay motionless, and the ceaseless shrilling of the cicadas and the hum of myriad insects alone revealed that anything was yet alive. Murad, too, lay perfectly motionless, still gazing eastward, eyes and ears intent, until the sun sank and the shadows lengthened: tinkling bells far off began to tell of shepherds driving their lazy goats down toward the folds; higher up the ravine Murad could see a flock scrambling down the gullies to the stream; birds flitted from bush to bush and a great shadow passed over the ravine as a vulture swept on his way eastward, not a feather moving in his outspread wings. Murad looked up at him for an instant, and then resumed his watch.

Five minutes passed, and suddenly the Circassian's gaze became more intent, and he half-turned his head as though the better to catch some sound. Was it real or fancied? Murad hardly knew. There it was again! a sharp clink, as of hoofs striking the rock. The suspense was long; but at last, round a turn of the path, nearly half a mile away, came three mounted figures riding westward at the best pace of their mules. On they came toward the edge of the opposite cliff, the leader, a peasant, mounted on a donkey; the other two rode mules, and as they began to descend the long slope, it was at last apparent to Murad that the second man was Yacub Bey, the captain, and behind him rode one of his Greek sailors. He drew a deep breath of satisfaction, and, flattening himself yet more on the rock, followed every movement of the party. Slowly and painfully the cautious animals bore their riders, and at the stream the party paused for a moment, but after a brief colloquy began the ascent. The mules stumbled perilously on the jagged track, hindered rather than helped by the cries and blows of their impatient riders; while the little donkey, surer-footed than they, gradually placed a long interval between himself and his followers. Peering over the cliff-top, the Circassian, breathing shorter and shorter, seemed as though he would impress his finger-nails into the adamantine rock on which he lay, and, as the leader passed unmindful below him, drew up his knees and crouched under the bushy screen. A few moments more, and the second rider reaches the point where the path bends just

below the ambushed man; carefully the mule sidles round the curve; now her head is straight again, and Yacub drives his heel against her flanks to urge her up the last ascent. A heavy breath, as of some wild animal, a clattering shower of earth and pebbles, and something hurls itself from the cliff-top on to the rider, and, bearing him instantly off the mule by irresistible impetus, hurls him headlong down the precipice, turning over and over in the descent. At the crash and Yacub's terrified yell, the peasant, already on the cliff-top, turned, sprang from his donkey, and rushed down the path toward the Greek sailor sitting transfixed on his mule. But the captain and his assailant have gone down by a far straighter way, and one which the bravest cragsman in the world would not have followed. Plunging from bowlder to bowlder, now crashing through a clump of bushes, now careening with horrid concussion on a jutting crag, the pair whirl down closely locked, a medley of frantic limbs dimly seen through a cloud of dust and a hail of falling stones! The pursuers could discern, when the rolling pair stopped at last on the brink of the stream, that neither man was yet dead; for the captain was stabbing with one hand at the Circassian above him, while with the other he struggled frantically to loose the death-grip from his throat. Bathed in each other's blood, heeding not the broken bones and jagged gashes which both had suffered in the fall, the pair heaved and strove; the herculean Circassian slowly but surely pressing out of Yacub's throat the little life which his fractured skull yet left to him. But the pursuers are upon them at last, and the Greek drives his long knife into Murad's side, and over and over on the beach, tearing it up in handfuls, the latter rolls in his death-agony. Scooping up a little brackish water, the peasant dashes it in Yacub's blood-spattered face; but the closed eyes do not open, and, thrusting his hand under the vest, the Cypriot can feel no heart-beat. The game is over, and the captain will never draw a piastre of insurance money for the ill-fated *Emir*.

The peasant rose to his feet as the Greek sailor came up, wiping from his knife the blood of Murad; laconically he ejaculated the one word, "Dead," and both

stood for a minute looking from opposite sides down on the disfigured corpse. An idea seemed to strike both simultaneously; looking in each other's eyes, they stooped down again without a word, and rifled the dead —first the captain and then the Circassian.

The result was not satisfactory, to judge from muttered reflections upon the female ancestry of both ejaculated by the sailor, and, with a parting kick, the latter would have left the two corpses to the birds of prey. But the Cypriot persuaded him to drag one body, while he himself followed with the other, toward a dry well a hundred yards down the gorge; while, balked of their prey, four vultures hovered above the cliff and swept over and over the scene of the struggle—the only things in heaven or earth who regretted Murad Tcherkess and his enemy Yacub Bey.

A drama above the clouds which just escaped being a tragedy. It was written by Joseph Montet for the San Francisco *Sunday Call*.

JEALOUSY IN MID-AIR.

Loud acclamations leaped from a thousand throats. The balloon had just started.

Like a falcon whose eyes the hunter has suddenly uncovered, it fled straight up into the azure space, borne away with lightning speed. Now the heads of the two aëronauts could barely be distinguished at the edge of the car.

Leaning over the slight ozier side, they watched the forms and dimensions of terrestrial objects diminish and fade away below them. What was that vague white-and-gray heap streaked in every direction by black lines? Was it Naples? Yes, Naples, which they had just quitted—a city reduced to the proportions of a beehive. But to the right, to the left, before, behind, what a marvellous horizon! Vesuvius was there, sleeping its alarming sleep; then, further away, the jagged line of the Apennines, and on the other side, as far as the eye could reach, the sea, the vast blue sea, sparkling in the broad sunlight.

Suddenly, amid the profound silence of the azure space, a woman's voice resounded, clear as the tinkling of crystal.

"Oliver," said she, "your hand!"

"Here it is, Lea," answered a man's voice.

"Thank you," said the woman, who straightened herself up, closing her eyes with a shiver.

The man raised his head and glanced at his companion, who, very pale, had seated herself upon a light bamboo stool.

"What is the matter with you?" he inquired.

"I was afraid," said she. "I felt dizziness seizing upon me; but it is over," she added, passing her delicate gloved hand across her eyes.

"Do you regret your whim?"

"No, certainly not. But a first experiment may

unstring the nerves. Oh, I will inure myself to it; rest easy on that score."

The man, standing erect, contemplated her. She was charming in her close-fitting tourist costume, with the jaunty masculine hat coquettishly placed upon her golden hair, fastened at the nape of the neck, and the pallor which increased the brightness of her black eyes.

The young woman contemplated her companion, whose manly visage, which had a musing expression, was framed by a thick and closely-cut blonde beard. As she saw he was frowning she said to him in her turn, in her musical voice:

"And you? Why have you that gloomy air?"

He did not answer the question, but, leaning a trifle over the edge of the car, said:

"We are ascending too rapidly!" And seizing a rope which hung within reach of his hand he gave it a pull. Almost instantaneously the young woman felt the balloon slacken its speed, then stop, and finally move in the opposite direction.

"Are we descending for good?" she asked.

"No," replied Oliver. "Presently we shall ascend again."

"When?"

"When I wish. I have only to close the valve which controls the gas. Do you see this rope I hold in my hand? It regulates our course."

"And if it should break?"

"It will not break; it is strong. But if, by a miracle, it should happen to disappear, we should be lost!"

"How?"

"The balloon is sufficiently charged with hydrogen to carry us to the regions where the air cannot be breathed. We should be asphyxiated."

"Happily it would take two miracles, it seems to me, for the rope is double, is it not?"

"It appears to be double now, but in reality there is only a single rope. Lean over the edge of the car a little. Do you see that ring up there? The rope passes through it and its two ends I hold in my hand. They are tied together, but a cut from a knife will suffice to separate them. See! Now the two ends are free. I have but to pull one of them, when the rope

will slip through the ring and fall at my feet, and we are off for the grand voyage!"

He had suited the action to the word. The rope had fallen at his feet. He coiled it about his arm and hurled it into space.

The young woman had risen, trembling, with a frightened look.

"Oliver," cried she, "what have you done? Are you out of your senses?"

The young man looked her full in the face and said in a very calm tone:

"I am not out of my senses."

"Then what do you want?"

"I want what is going to happen. I desire that we shall die together, here, in the broad heavens, far from that earth I have cursed since you there appeared to me such as you are, since the mud of which it is formed bespattered the idol of my superstition adored in you!"

The young woman stared at him in amazement and terror.

"Oh, do not protest!" exclaimed Oliver. "Every feint is useless. In a word I will convince you of what I say. For two days past I have known you were deceiving me, that you were listening to another suitor. Yes, a fool, a fop; that Count Moreno, who followed us from Venice, whom we found in Milan, in Florence, in Rome; whom you caused me to receive as a travelling companion; to whom I have daily extended my hand, imbecile that I am, and who must have had many a hearty laugh with you at my innocent confidence. Yes, I know all this! How did I discover it? You care very little, no doubt. I have followed you. I have played the spy upon you. The confession does not humiliate me in the least. It was imperative for me to know, and I do know with such certainty that I feel my eyes burned by the fiery points of the evidence!

"And it is you who have done this. You, nobility, purity, the ideal, even—for you were all that to me, and you know it—and more, if possible: a sort of divinity before whom knelt my respectful and submissive love—for I loved you thus, to the point of sacrificing everything to the absolute worship I had vowed to you, everything. But what need have I to repeat all this

to you? Do you not know it as well as I? Since we left New York, six months ago, have I not been devoted to you—have I not been constantly the submissive slave of your will, of your caprices? You wished to wait, you said, until the period of mourning for your dead husband had expired before bestowing upon me your hand in marriage. And what has been the result? You have determined to break our engagement, to cast me off and become the wife of an Italian nobleman!

"Your rôle has been difficult to play, but you have filled it like a consummate actress! You, for whom love was but poetic aspirations, ethereal dreams, soarings into the azure space; you, whose siren voice, with its vibrating melodies, sang to me the delights of an infinite ecstasy, of an ideal flight into the blue heavens like the flights of the swallows and eagles! Well, your dream is realized, and you are going to live it out until it kills you! You are caught in the trap of your own whim, for it was you who yesterday took the notion of buying this balloon from the aëronaut who was going to ascend in it and of departing in it with me. Seasonable caprice, was it not, to worthily finish the Neapolitan carnival? It was my vengeance you offered me! I seized it. And now it is to another vengeance I deliver you, to that of the azure space jeered at by your poetic falsehoods, to that of the heavens mocked by your sacrilegious irony!

"Ah! they avenge themselves cruelly, these impassive judges! Do you know what punishment they will inflict upon you? One day a couple of adventurers of the air, too rash, made the experiment. They were found in their car, rigid and cold, their visages swollen, the blood having flowed from their ears, their eyes, and their mouths! Such is the end that awaits you. Soon a red foam will heighten the carmine of your lips and red drops will hang like coral pendants from your delicate ears, while your beautiful eyes will weep tears of blood!"

The young woman had straightened herself, seized by a convulsive trembling.

"You will not do that, Oliver!" she cried. "It is too horrible! I do not want to die that frightful death!"

Oliver had crossed his arms upon his breast.

"If I wished to prevent it, I could not do so now!"

She sprang upon him and tore from him the knife he yet held in his hand.

"But with this," cried she, "I can cut open the balloon!"

She raised her eyes to the round bulk of the aërostat.

"Try," said Oliver coldly.

She grasped the ropes, put one foot on the edge of the car, and strove to raise herself by the strength of her wrists. But dizziness overcame her, and she fell backward, breathless. The knife, escaping from her hand, went whirling through the air.

She remained a moment as if annihilated.

"See," said Oliver, in a mocking voice, "the scorching southern sun is heating the balloon and dilating the gas. We are making very rapid headway!"

He looked upward, contemplating the azure heavens with an ecstatic air.

Suddenly, while he was speaking, the young woman uttered an exclamation of joy, and a flash of hope illuminated her visage. Slowly, quietly, she put her hand in the pocket of her dress, drew from it an object which she concealed, then abruptly raised her arm and two explosions resounded.

"You have reckoned without your host!" cried she, with a laugh of triumph. "Some American women never travel without a revolver, and they are right."

Cut through and through by the two balls, the balloon was already beginning to descend.

Oliver leaned over the edge of the car.

"So be it!" said he. "We are over the open sea. Blue for blue, we shall still die in the azure."

The balloon was visibly collapsing. Its speed became terrible. Oliver himself, choking, closed his eyes, and amid the silence of the empty heavens the balloon pursued its dizzy descent.

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NAPLES, February 28th, 1884.

MY DEAR OLIVER:—I sent to inquire about you this morning. They informed me that you were better. I am delighted to hear it. I am also better. You certainly will learn this with pleasure. I have given a few bank-notes to the fisherman who picked us up

and took us ashore in his boat—both in a swoon, as it appears. Here is a poor fellow who can say, without speaking metaphorically, that fortune fell down to him from the heavens! Travelling in your company, my friend, is decidedly too dangerous. I begin to believe that one day or another you would bring me bad luck. Excuse this superstition, hatched in my brain in this classic land of the Jettatura, and permit me for the future to pursue alone my journey in the country of romance. My dear assassin, I am, without too much animosity, yours, LEA.

She was very much in love, and her story, as told by Ambrose Bierce in the San Francisco *Examiner*, is an interesting revelation of the feminine heart.

AN HEIRESS FROM REDHORSE.

JUNE 20.

. . . I find myself more and more interested in him. It is not, I am sure, his—do you know any noun corresponding to the adjective "handsome?"—one does not like to say "beauty" when speaking of a man. He is handsome enough, heaven knows; I should not even care to trust you with him—faithfullest of all possible wives that you are—when he looks his best, as he always does. Nor do I think the fascination of his manners has much to do with it. You recollect that the charm of art inheres in that which is indefinable, and to you and me, my dear Irene, I fancy there is rather less of that in the branch of art under consideration than to girls in their first season. I fancy I know how my fine gentleman produces many of his effects and could perhaps instruct him to heighten them. Nevertheless his manner is something truly delightful. I suppose what interests me chiefly is the man's brains. His conversation is the best I have ever heard, and altogether unlike any one's else. He seems to know everything, as indeed he ought, for he has been everywhere, read everything, seen all there is to see—sometimes I think rather more than is good for him—and had acquaintance with the queerest people! And then his voice—Irene, when I hear it I actually feel as if I ought to have paid at the door, though of course it is my own door. . . .

JULY 3.

. . . I fear my remarks about Dr. Barritz must have been, being thoughtless, very silly, or you would not have written of him with such levity, not to say disrespect. Believe me, dearest, he has more dignity and seriousness (of the kind, I mean, which is not inconsistent with a manner sometimes playful and always charming) than any of the men that you and I ever met.

And young Raynor—you knew Raynor at Monterey—tells me that the men all like him, and that he is treated with something like deference everywhere. There is a mystery, too—something about his connection with the Blavatsky people in Northern India. Raynor either would not or could not tell me the particulars. I infer that Dr. Barritz is thought—don't you dare to laugh—a magician! Could anything be finer than that? An ordinary mystery is not, of course, as good as a scandal, but when it relates to dark and dreadful practices—to the exercise of unearthly powers—could anything be more piquant? It explains, too, the singular influence the man has upon me. It is the indefinable in his art—black art! Seriously, dear, I quite tremble when he looks me full in the eyes with those unfathomable orbs of his which I have already vainly attempted to describe to you. How dreadful if he have the power to make one fall in love! Do you know if the Blavatsky crowd have that power—outside of Sepoy?

JULY 16.

. . . The strangest thing! Last evening while aunt was attending one of the hotel hops (I hate them) Dr. Barritz called. It was scandalously late—I actually believe he had talked with aunty in the ball-room and learned from her that I was alone. I had been all the evening contriving how to worm out of him the truth about his connection with the Thugs in Sepoy, and all of that black business, but the moment he fixed his eyes on me, for I admitted him, I'm ashamed to say I was helpless. I trembled. I blushed. I—O Irene! Irene! I love the man beyond expression, and you know how it is yourself!

Fancy! I, an ugly duckling from Redhorse—daughter (they say) of old "Calamity Jim"—certainly his heiress, with no living relation but an absurd old aunt who spoils me a thousand and fifty ways—absolutely destitute of everything but $1,000,000 and a hope in Paris—I, darling, to love a god like him! My dear, if I had you here I could tear your hair out with mortification.

I am convinced that he is aware of my feeling, for he stayed but a few moments, said nothing but what

another man might have said half as well, and pretending that he had an engagement went away. I learned to-day (a little bird told me—the bell-boy) that he went straight to bed. How does that strike you as an evidence of exemplary habits?

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JULY 17.

. . . That little wretch Raynor called yesterday and his babble set me almost wild. He never runs down—that is to say, when he does run down a score of reputations more or less he does not pause between one reputation and the next. (By the way, he inquired about you, and his manifestations of interest in you had, I confess, a good deal of genuine vraisemblance.) Mr. Raynor observes no game laws; like the death which he would inflict if slanders were fatal, he has all seasons for his own. But I like him, for we knew one another at Redhorse, when we were young and true-hearted and barefooted. He was known in those fair days as "Giggles," and I—O Irene! can you ever forgive me?—I was called "Gunny." God knows why; perhaps in allusion to the material of my pinafores; perhaps because the name is an alliteration with "Giggles;" for Gig and I were inseparable playmates, and the miners may have thought it a delicate compliment to recognize some kind of relationship between us.

Later we took in a third—another of adversity's brood, who, like Garrick between tragedy and comedy, had a chronic inability to adjudicate the rival claims (to himself) of frost and famine. Between him and the grave there was seldom anything more than a single suspender and the hope of a meal which would at the same time support life and make it insupportable. He literally picked up a precarious living for himself and an aged mother by "chloriding the dumps;" that is to say, the miners permitted him to search the heaps of waste rock for such pieces of "pay ore" as had been overlooked; and these he sacked up and sold at the Syndicate mill. He became a member of our firm—"Gunny, Giggles and Dumps" thenceforth—through my favor; for I could not then, nor can I now, be indifferent to his courage and prowess in defending

against Giggles the immemorial right of his sex to insult a strange and unprotected female—myself. After Old Jim struck it in the Calamity and I began to wear shoes to school, and, in emulation, Giggles took to washing his face and became Jack Raynor, of Wells, Fargo & Co., and old Mrs. Barts was herself chlorided to her fathers, Dumps drifted over to San Juan Smith and turned stage driver and was killed by road agents.

Why do I tell you all this, dear? Because it is heavy on my heart. Because I walk the valley of humility. Because I am subduing myself to permanent consciousness of my unworthiness to unloose the latchet of his shoe. Because, O dear! O dear! there's a cousin of Dumps at this hotel! I haven't spoken to him. I never had any acquaintance with him, but do you suppose He has recognized me? Do, please, give me in your next your candid, sure-enough opinion about it and say you don't think so. Do you think He knows about me already and that is why He left me last evening when He saw that I blushed and trembled like a fool under his eyes? You know I can't bribe all the newspapers. I can't go back on anybody who was good to Gunny at Redhorse—not if I'm pitched out of society into the sea. So the skeleton sometimes rattles behind the door. I never cared much before, as you know, but now—now it is not the same. Jack Raynor I am sure of—he will not tell him. He seems, indeed, to hold him in such respect as hardly to dare speak to him at all, and I'm a good deal that way myself. Dear! dear! I wish I had something besides a million dollars! If Jack were three inches taller I'd marry him and go back to Redhorse and wear sackcloth again to the end of my miserable days. . . .

JULY 25.

. . . We had a splendid sunset last evening and I must tell you all about it. I ran away from aunty and everybody, and was walking alone on the beach. I expect you to believe, you infidel! that I had not looked out of my window on the seaward side of the hotel and seen him walking alone on the beach. If you are not lost to every feeling of womanly delicacy you will accept my statement without question. I soon established myself under my sunshade and had for some

time been gazing out dreamily over the sea, when he approached, walking close to the edge of the water—it was ebb-tide. I assure you the wet sand actually brightened about his feet! As he approached me he lifted his hat, saying: "Miss Dement, may I sit with you, or will you walk with me?"

The possibility that neither might be agreeable seems not to have occurred to him. Did you ever know such assurance? Assurance? My dear, it was gall—downright gall! Well, I didn't find it wormwood, and replied, with my untutored Redhorse heart in my throat: "I—I shall be pleased to do anything." Could words have been more stupid? There are depths of fatuity in me, friend o' my soul, which are simply bottomless!

He extended his hand, smiling, and I delivered mine into it without a moment's hesitation, and when his fingers closed about it to assist me to my feet, the consciousness that it trembled made me blush worse than the red west. I got up, however, and after a while, observing that he had not let go my hand, I pulled on it a little, but unsuccessfully. He simply held on, saying nothing, but looking down into my face with some kind of a smile—I didn't know—how could I?—whether it was affectionate, derisive, or what, for I did not look at him. How beautiful he was with the red fires of sunset burning in the depths of his eyes! Do you know, dear, if the Thugs have any special kind of eyes? Ah, you should have seen his superb attitude, the godlike inclination of his head as he stood over me after I had got upon my feet! It was a noble picture, but I soon destroyed it, for I began at once to sink again to the earth. There was only one thing for him to do and he did it: he supported me with an arm about my waist.

"Miss Dement, are you ill?" he said. It was an exclamation; there was neither alarm nor solicitude in it. If he had added: "I suppose that is about what I am expected to say," he would hardly have expressed his sense of the situation more clearly. His manner filled me with shame and indignation, for I was suffering acutely. I wrenched my hand out of his, grasped the arm supporting me, and pushing myself free fell plump into the sand and sat helpless. My hat had come off in

the struggle and my hair tumbled about my face and shoulders in the most mortifying way.

"Go away from me," I cried, half-choking. "Oh, please go away, you—you Thug! How dare you think that when my leg is asleep?"

I actually said those identical words! And then I broke down and sobbed. Irene, I fear I blubbered!

His manner altered in an instant—I could see that much through my fingers and hair. He dropped on one knee beside me, parted the tangle of hair, and said in the tenderest way: "My poor girl, God knows I have not intended to pain you. How should I?—I who love you—I who have loved you for years!"

He had pulled my wet hands away from my face and was covering them with kisses. My cheeks were like two coals, my whole face was flaming and, I think, steaming. I hid it on his shoulder—there was no other place. And oh, my dear friend, how my leg tingled and thrilled, and how I wanted to kick!

We sat so for a long time. He had released one of my hands to pass his arm about me again, and I had possessed myself of my handkerchief and was drying my eyes and my nose. I would not look up until that was done; he tried in vain to push me a little away and gaze into my eyes. Presently, when all was right and it had grown a bit dark, I lifted my head, looked him straight in the eyes, and smiled my best.

"What do you mean," I said, "by years and years?"

"Dearest," he replied very gravely, very earnestly, "in the absence of the sunken cheeks, the hollow eyes, the lank hair, the slouching gait, the rags, dirt, and youth, can you not—will you not understand—Gunny, I'm Dumps."

In a moment I was upon my feet and he upon his. I seized him by the lapels of his coat and peered into his handsome face in the deepening darkness. I was breathless with excitement.

"And you are not dead?" I asked, hardly knowing what I said.

"Only dead in love, dear. I recovered from the road agent's bullet, but this, I fear, is fatal."

"But about Jack—Mr. Raynor? Don't you know——"

"I am ashamed to say, darling, that it was upon that unworthy person's invitation that I came here from Vienna."

Irene, they have played it upon

Your affectionate friend,

MARY JANE DEMENT.

P. S.—The worst of it is that there is no mystery; that was an invention of Jack to arouse my curiosity and interest. James is not a Thug. He assures me that in all his wanderings he has never set foot in Sepoy.

Theodore de Banville, in the Newark *News*, tells this charming and touching story, of a love which lasted for half a century, and which asked nothing in return.

HOW A WOMAN LOVED.

"As the marquise has said," began the old doctor, "love is an affair of temperament; for my part, a passion came under my observation that lasted fifty-five years, without a day of respite, and was terminated only by death."

The marquise clapped her hands.

"Isn't that nice!" cried she. "How delicious to be loved so! What happiness to live fifty-five years enveloped by such affection! How happy he should be, and how he ought to bless life, the man who is adored in that fashion!"

The doctor resumed with a smile:

"Indeed, madam, you are not deceived upon the point that the beloved being was a man. You know him—he is M. Chouquet, the apothecary of the town. As to the woman, you knew her also—she was the old chair-mender, who came every year to the château. But I will make myself better understood."

The enthusiasm of the ladies had cooled and their countenances expressed disgust, as if love had no business save with elegant and high-born people.

The doctor continued:

"Three months ago I was summoned to that old woman's death-bed. She had arrived the day before in the wagon that served her for a dwelling, drawn by the sorry horse you have seen, and accompanied by her two huge black dogs, her friends and guardians. The curé was already there. She made us her testamentary executors, and, to explain to us the meaning of her last wishes, related to us the history of her whole life. I know of nothing more touching.

"Her father and mother both were chair-menders. She had never lived in a house built upon the ground. When young she had wandered about, ragged and dirty.

They stopped just outside of the villages, along the ditches; they unharnessed; the horse cropped the grass; the dog dozed, his muzzle upon his paws, and the child rolled amid the verdure, while her parents mended, in the shade of the roadside elms, all the old chairs of the commune. They spoke but little. After the few words necessary to decide who should go around among the houses uttering the well-known cry, 'The chair-mender is here!' they began to twist the straw, sitting opposite to each other or side by side. When the child strayed too far or endeavored to make the acquaintance of some village urchin, her father's angry voice recalled her with, 'Will you come here, you little wretch?' These were the kindest words she ever heard.

"When she grew larger they sent her to gather up the broken chairs. While thus engaged she became acquainted with several lads here and there, but it was then the parents of her new friends who roughly recalled their children, shouting, 'Will you come here, you slovenly boy? I'll teach you better than to chatter with barefooted vagrants!' Often the little lads threw stones at her.

"Some ladies having given her a few sous, she kept them carefully. One day—she was then twelve years old—as she was passing through this district, she met back of the cemetery little Chouquet, who was weeping because a comrade had stolen two sous from him. Those tears of a little bourgeois, of one of those lads whom she imagined in her weak vagrant's head to be always contented and joyous, upset her. She approached, and when she knew the reason of his trouble she poured into his hands all her savings, seven sous. He naturally took them and wiped away his tears. Then, wild with joy, she had the audacity to kiss him. As he was attentively gazing at the money, he let her go ahead. Seeing that she was neither repulsed nor beaten, she began again; she hugged him with all her might, with all her heart. Then she ran off.

"What was passing in her miserable head? Had she attached herself to this boy because she had sacrificed her vagabond's fortune for him, or because she had given him her first tender kiss? The mystery is the same for children as for grown-up people. For

months she dreamed of that corner of the cemetery and of the boy; in the hope of seeing him again she robbed her parents, pocketing a sou here and another there from the money she collected for chair-mending, or the sums with which she was sent to buy provisions.

"When she returned to the district she had two francs in her pocket, but she could only catch a glimpse of the little apothecary, looking very neat, through the window of the paternal shop, between a bottle filled with red liquid and a shelf well stocked with drugs. She only loved him the more, fascinated, agitated, rendered ecstatic by this glory of colored water, this apotheosis of sparkling glass.

"She kept in her memory the ineffaceable recollection of him, and when she met him the following year, back of the school-house, playing marbles with his comrades, she hugged and kissed him with such violence that he howled with fear. Then to quiet him she gave him her money—three francs twenty centimes—a genuine treasure that he stared at with wide-open eyes. He took it and let her caress him as long as she wanted to.

"For four years more she poured into his hands all the money she could get, which he pocketed conscientiously in exchange for willing kisses. It was one time thirty sous, once or twice two francs, once twelve sous only (she wept with pain and humiliation on account of the smallness of the sum, but the year had been bad), and the last time five francs, a huge coin that made him laugh contentedly.

"She had no thought but of him. He awaited her return with a certain impatience and ran to meet her as soon as he saw her, which made the young girl's heart leap.

"Then he disappeared. He had been sent to college. She found this out by shrewd questioning. Then she used infinite diplomacy to change the route of her parents, so that she could pass through here at holiday time. She succeeded, but only after a year spent in stratagems; she had thus been two years without seeing him, and she hardly recognized him, so greatly had he changed—he was so tall, so much improved, and so imposing in his jacket with gilt buttons. He feigned

not to see her and passed proudly by her. This made her weep for two days, and from that time she suffered constantly.

"Every year she returned, passed before him without daring to speak to him, and he did not even deign to turn his eyes toward her. She loved him desperately. She said to me: 'He is the only man I have seen on this earth. I know not if any others exist!

"Her parents died. She continued their trade; but she took two dogs instead of one—two terrible dogs that no one would have dared to brave. One day, on entering this village, in which her heart had remained, she saw a young woman come out of the Chouquet shop on the arm of the man she adored. She was his wife. He was married. That very evening she threw herself into the pond near the mayor's house. A belated drunkard fished her out and carried her to the apothecary shop.

"The younger Chouquet in a dressing-gown came down to care for her, and restored her to consciousness without appearing to recognize her. Then he said to her in a harsh voice: 'You are mad! You must not be so stupid!'

"This sufficed to cure her. He had spoken to her. She was happy for a long while. He would receive nothing for his care of her, though she stoutly insisted upon paying him. And all her life passed thus. As she mended chairs she thought of Chouquet. Every year she saw him through the window of the shop. She acquired the habit of purchasing of him supplies of trifling medicines. In that way she saw him close beside her, spoke to him, and gave him money.

"As I told you when I began, she died this spring. After having related her sad history, she begged me to take to the man whom she had loved so patiently all the savings of her lifetime, for she had toiled only to put aside and be sure that he would think of her, at least once, after she was dead.

"She gave me 2,327 francs. I left with monsieur the curé the twenty-seven francs for the burial and carried away the rest when she had uttered her last sigh.

"The next day I went to the home of the Chouquets. They were just finishing their breakfast. They made

me sit down and I began my speech in an unsteady voice, satisfied that they would weep. As soon as he comprehended that he had been beloved by that vagabond, that chair-mender, Chouquet leaped to his feet with indignation. His wife was equally exasperated. Chouquet strode about the room, exclaiming, 'This is simply horrible! Oh! if I had known it when she was alive, I would have had her arrested by the gendarmes and put in prison!' I was stupefied at the result of my pious undertaking, but I had my mission to complete, and I resumed:

"'She charged me to give you her savings, amounting to over 2,000 francs. As what I have told you seems to be very disagreeable to you, it would, perhaps, be better to give the money to the poor!'

"The man and woman stared at me, dumb with amazement. I took the money from my pocket. Then I demanded, 'What is your decision?' Madame Chouquet was the first to speak. 'Since it was the woman's last wish,' she said, 'it seems to me that we cannot well refuse to take the money!' The husband, slightly confused, resumed, 'We can at least buy something with it for our children!'

"I said, with an air of disgust, 'as you please.' Then I handed him the money, bowed, and took my departure. That was the only absolutely unselfish love I ever met with in my life, the love of the poor chair-mender for so unworthy a man," said the doctor in conclusion.

Then the marquise, who had tears in her eyes, sighed:

"Decidedly, only women know how to love!"

The identity of a great man is revealed by the remarkable skill with which he handled the chessmen. The story is from *Chambers's Journal.*

A MEMORABLE GAME OF CHESS.

FIFTY years ago, in Mehemet Ali's time, Suleiman Pasha, a naturalized Frenchman, was commander-in-chief of the Egyptian artillery, and universally acknowledged to be the best chess-player in Cairo. As a soldier he stood in high favor with the court as well as with the people; for in the war waged by the Sultan of Turkey against Mehemet Ali in 1839, the Egyptians owed their victory in the notable battle of Nisib to the prompt decision and strategy of Suleiman Pasha. The Egyptian army had already taken to flight, carrying its commander, the heroic Ibrahim Pasha, away with it, when suddenly, as if by magic, the battle took a favorable turn, changing the fleeing masses into pursuers, who succeeded in completely vanquishing the Turkish troops. This blow proved fatal to Mahmoud, the unhappy sultan, whose supreme power hitherto had been unquestioned. He took the loss of his brave army so much to heart that he died of grief barely a week afterward.

When peace had succeeded war, Suleiman Pasha returned to the city of the caliphs to enjoy there his favorite pastime of chess. Punctually every afternoon he made his appearance in a café situated on the banks of the Nile, where, on the terrace, under the shade of mighty palm-trees, a seat was specially reserved for him, and there he fought a daily battle with the venerable Ulema, Reshid Aga. The field upon which the battle was fought was the sixty-four black and white squares of the chessboard, where ivory armies strove with each other, each trying hard to decoy the other into some hidden trap. They only ceased when the evening twilight descended, and when the cry of the muezzin from the minaret of the mosque called the faithful to prayers, to resume it again the next day, and to continue for weeks and months until one of the

combatants was defeated. But it was never the Pasha who was beaten, though Reshid Aga was not only highly considered on account of his great learning, but also far-famed for his masterly playing of chess.

The two masters were generally surrounded by all the best players of Cairo, who followed their moves with eager and attentive looks. One afternoon, while Suleiman Pasha was waiting for Reshid Aga, a stranger stepped up to him and addressed him as follows: "Pasha, may I propose a game of chess to thee?"

The persons who as usual had gathered round the latter were so much startled by this unexpected proposal that their chibouks nearly dropped from their grasp, while a gray-bearded Cadi was almost choked in the act of gulping down his Mocha. For who could be so daring as to venture to challenge the conqueror of Reshid Aga?

Suleiman Pasha, however, only casting a searching look upon the stranger, quietly replied: "I am at thy service. What is the stake thou art accustomed to play for?"

"For nothing the first time; for a great stake the next. But it is for thee, Pasha, to name the stake now."

"A hundred ducats won't be too much, then?" Suleiman Pasha replied, again looking inquiringly at the stranger, whose face remained quite unmoved while he calmly took his place.

The board was brought and lots were cast for colors: the Pasha drew black, the stranger white.

A great crowd of enthusiastic spectators soon gathered round the players. After the very first moves it was clear to all that they had a master-player before them. The ivory figures seemed to grow into life in the hands of the stranger; it was as if real soldiers moved on the black and white squares, blindly obeying the commands of their leaders. Suleiman Pasha also soon became aware of the crushing power of his adversary; he felt as if the grip of an iron fist held him in bonds. In vain he tried to shake off his opponent; vain was his sacrifice of knight and castle; the stranger's power did not seem to weaken a bit. The Pasha sat in deep earnest thought; opposite to him the

stranger, calm, but with a proud look, like the marble statue of a commander-in-chief.

A gleam of joy spread suddenly over the Pasha's features; he saw the chance for a capital move, and, quite excited, he placed his queen right in front of his opponent's queen. A murmur of discontent arose among the spectators; the game seemed lost for the Pasha; he must have overlooked that his queen was left unprotected. The face of Reshid Aga, who also looked on, beamed with pleasure; at a glance he had thoroughly mastered the combination of his friend. The stranger took a much longer time to consider than usual before he slowly lifted his lean hand.

"No doubt he will take the queen," the spectators whispered to each other.

"Then he will be mate in eight moves," Reshid Aga said, gleefully rubbing his hands.

"And if he does not take her?"

"Then he will lose his own."

For a moment the stranger appeared undecided; but suddenly like lightning his hand descended on the board. Quietly and calmly he moved one of his pawns a square ahead.

All looked surprised at each other, muttering: "To lose the queen is losing the game!" while Suleiman Pasha, smiling triumphantly, removed the hostile queen from the board.

The onlookers, who mostly sided with the Pasha, breathed as if they had been relieved from a heavy load. In their opinion the game was decided, for White could not hold out without his queen. Several of them were already on the point of withdrawing, when they were suddenly startled by the clear ringing voice of the stranger, who called out: "Mate in twelve moves."

Suleiman Pasha's looks grew dark—the smile died on his lips. A change had as suddenly overcast the features of Reshid Aga; almost beside himself, he jumped on a seat to follow the game from a more elevated point, while the spectators, barely daring to draw breath, counted the moves as they followed each other.

With masterly skill White now led his force into the field, encircling the hostile king in a powerful grasp and

keeping him within an iron ring. At the tenth move the Pasha tried to break through the blockade by sacrificing his queen, but in vain. White declined to accept the sacrifice, and moved his knight with "Check to the king." Eleventh move! The spectators, whose excitement had now reached fever-heat, saw that their Pasha, never before vanquished, would be checkmated the next move. Suleiman's king was compelled to withdraw into a corner, and with the twelfth move, as he had predicted, the stranger pronounced "Checkmate!"

A murmur of admiration was heard from the spectators, while the Pasha sat there with bent head, as if trying to search in his memory, when suddenly, as if a thought had flashed upon him, he turned upon the stranger. "Once already in my life," he said, "I have seen chess played in the manner in which thou hast played to-day. The masterly moves are not unknown to me, but I was unable to resist them. The game, however, which was then played before my eyes was a great deal more beautiful even than to-day. Guns of the heaviest calibre represented the castles, fleet cavalry were the knights, and in place of the pawns well-armed infantry formed the vanguard. And when the guns on the one side thundered their 'Check' to the other, the ground beneath our feet seemed to shake, as if burning lava was thrown from a volcano.

"At that time we stood opposed to an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men, a terrible number, which, led by the genius of a single man, threatened to crush us completely. And this man whose genius made our brave soldiers take to flight, and whom it was impossible to withstand, was a son of the cold North. It was only to the recklessness of Hafiz Pasha, the Turkish commander-in-chief, who envied the youthful genius his brilliant success, and who, though fully warned, wildly pursued the Egyptians, that we owed the victory of Nisib, which otherwise we never should have gained."

The Pasha stopped, and casting a long and penetrating look on his adversary, suddenly cried out enthusiastically: "Stranger, thy incomparable play of to-day recalls to my memory afresh the game of chess at Nisib

and its skilful player. Only one man can play like that, and that man is—Colonel Moltke!"

"Thou hast hit it, Pasha," the stranger calmly replied. "My name is Moltke."

This, indeed, was Count von Moltke. While a young man he went to the East, and was in the service of Sultan Mahmoud from 1835 to 1839. He was present at the battle of Nisib, when, as above said, the Turkish commander-in-chief, jealous of the great abilities of the young soldier, refused to follow Moltke's advice and so lost the battle.

Here is a love story whose hero fully deserved the happiness which it is reasonable to suppose he enjoyed. His adventures are told in the *Home Maker* by Alice L. Clarke.

AN ECCENTRIC ROMANCE.

"It's a pleasing story," said William Perry, our host of the yacht Eloise, "and it's brightly written, like all of Killock's. But it's the same old thing—lovers, misunderstandings, despair, three quarters of the way through; then there are gleams of hope, a complication is disposed of on every page, and in the last half column Theodore marries Genevieve. Why does no one write a story that one could read without feeling that he had read it over and over again before?"

"But," I suggested modestly, as becomes one whose appearances in print have been confined mostly to the "Query" column of the Weekly Hearth-rug, or the "Help wanted, cook, second girl, or laundress" advertising page of the Trumpet, "really in tales of modern society, mustn't the incidents be about the same, and isn't the charm usually in the manner of telling?"

Willard and my brother are writing a novel, which they believe will mark an epoch in the history of fiction. Whether, after a moment's reflection, they would have proposed something important in the way of a story-telling theory cannot be known, for the other member of the company, Veranus Van Noon, said: "I will tell you a love story in which there are no lover's quarrels, no heroic struggles with sentimental woes; and yet I think you will agree that the lovers were romantic gentlemen, and that in winning their sweethearts they had some truly odd and interesting adventures. It is my own story, and you will recognize some of the characters."

A year ago Veranus had disappeared suddenly, and for months Willard, my brother, and I, his closest and warmest friends, had heard nothing of him. But he had been in the habit of journeying suddenly to all parts of the earth, so we had not been surprised until we received the news of his marriage. With wealth, good

looks and fine qualities of heart and mind, he had so long surprised us by remaining unmarried that at last we had come to expect that he would pursue his amiable, quiet, and dignified way heartwhole and fancy-free the rest of his life.

We had thought him a somewhat conventional, conservative and unenthusiastic person. How little we know each other! The friend whose biography we think we could write has emotions, fancies and convictions of which we do not dream. Veranus Van Noon had it in him to become the hero of what my brother and his fellow-novelist have classified as an eccentric romance.

"You know that for a long time I have expected to meet my fate," began Veranus. "Whenever I have received a scarf-pin as a souvenir of my having been best man at the wedding of one of my friends, I have thought, 'This completes the collection; probably I myself shall marry presently.' But that reflection lacked a shade of its original confidence when I made it over my seventeenth pin. At last, however, I was right. I was then on the point of starting on the most important journey of my life, beginning with a trip in a Hudson River steamer.

"Possibly you do not believe in love at first sight—I do. If you do not, you would hardly understand; if you do, I need not try to tell you what filled my soul when I saw Beatrice, nor how I studied her at once dear face before some few words shaped themselves in my mind: 'My wife—if some time she will love me—my fate at last! Only a few hours more on this steamer! Not a minute to be lost—the situation demands action.'

"I went and stood near Beatrice's father, adjusted my field-glass, and eyed the landscape with an air of having paid for my scenery at so much per gaze, or of finding every item of it too valuable to be missed. It has since occurred to me that, with my glass arranged as it was, I couldn't possibly have seen anything, unless I had been on the verge of total blindness. I remember now, though I didn't notice it then, that a young man—a young man who wore a stiff loose linen duster and a queer kind of linen helmet, with green

trimmings, pulled down over his forehead—had strolled aimlessly across the deck after me, and now stood near.

"I said to myself: 'Her father has now watched me long enough to wonder what I see that is so very interesting, to wish that he had a glass himself, and to conclude that I don't intend to offer him mine.' So I said:

"'Will you try my glass, sir? The view from here is fine. Allow me. Shall I hold your note-book while you just look at that magnificent scenery in the west?'

"It was queer, certainly, how the leaves of that note-book kept fluttering in the wind, so that while the old gentleman's back was turned I could read that they were all written over with notes about strata and geological epochs; but when he faced around I had somehow got a firmer hold on it, which I flattered myself expressed as much delicate consideration for the precious volume as if it had been a jewel-casket or a peach-blow vase.

"I remarked, 'I made a great mistake in not studying the geology of this country.'

"The old gentleman almost hugged me. 'Geology! My dear sir, every traveller should understand the geological formation of this region. I have a few notes here.'

"We were acquainted, friends, and deep in the subject which interested Beatrice's father in ten minutes. This was a good beginning—but time was short. My second move was now necessary, primed, one should say, with good manners at any cost. I reluctantly interrupted the old gentleman: 'I beg your pardon, professor, but it occurs to me that I must seem very intrusive to your wife and daughter. I am depriving them of your company and of this valuable explanation; and I notice, too, that the sun is getting around to where they sit. Shall I not place some chairs for them here?' and almost before the professor knew what had happened we were all chatting together. The time slipped away toward the dinner-hour. Beatrice said little. The breeze blew the curls about her head in a golden halo. A color like the

sunset, toward which she looked, rose in her face. I was congratulating myself that I had actually scraped acquaintance with these evidently careful and dignified persons without being taken for a rowdy or a confidence man, when the dinner-gong struck. The professor started up in dismay, suddenly realizing our rapid acquaintance-making. I think he was disturbed by a guilty consciousness that he had made the advances.

"'I am glad to have met you, sir,' he said stiffly, and walked away, his wife on one arm and Beatrice on the other.

"I collapsed for a moment, limp and horrified; then I dashed down to the dining-room and bribed the head waiter, who told me to return in ten minutes. While I waited I thought oddly enough of my sister Bertha. I was Bertha's guardian. Since her childhood, when my mother and father had died, she had lived with Aunt Jerome, and we had made but short visits to each other. It seemed to me that she ought to pass some of her life in the house that had been the Van Noon home for generations, so it had been arranged that she and Aunt Jerome were to come and live there with me for a year or two. Just then she astounded me by asking my consent to her marriage, or at least to her engagement.

"I refused. It was absurd! She was too young! I had no serious objections, but I objected seriously. Her lover came to see me. He seemed an intelligent, good-looking, good-hearted young fellow. Our interview was brief. I think he went away feeling somewhat ill-used. I let him see that for my part I wondered that such very young persons as he and Bertha were not content to wait five years or so before considering themselves engaged.

"'Dear little Bertha! I'll look into that matter again,' I said to myself; then I saw that it was time for me to go to the dining-room to secure the seat which the head waiter had promised me.

"In innocent delight and surprise—beautifully assumed I have since been informed—I took the seat he gave me next to Beatrice, and exclaimed, 'How fortunate I am! Shall I intrude if I sit here, professor? This is, indeed, a happy chance for me!'

"The professor had previously asserted his dignity, and made it plain that he was not the man to fraternize with chance acquaintances. So now he received me with the cordiality and openness of heart which were evidently natural to him. It chanced that the young man whom I had noticed before, who had now removed his linen helmet and wore a pair of immense smoked glasses, sat opposite us. I noticed him vaguely, and thought if he enjoyed that dinner half as much as I, he must be remarkably happy. The mildly pedantic, kindly professor was entertaining; Mrs. Professor, who rather monopolized the conversation, was certainly wonderfully witty and intelligent; and Beatrice—ah, Beatrice was my ideal realized at last!

"After dinner we sat on deck and watched the moon rise. It seemed as if my lucky star rose with it. The silver shimmer of the river, the slowly-moving soft masses of cloud, the shadows in the sky, and on the forests and hills along the shore, grew every moment more tranquilly beautiful. Watching them, Mr. and Mrs. Professor gradually fell into silence, and then went fast asleep. I had intended to utilize these precious moments by casually inquiring of Beatrice what was their plan of travel, by tentatively observing that that plan coincided with my own, and by giving incidentally some little information about myself—something commendatory if possible; but I forgot to be strategic. I talked just to hear her reply. Nothing could have been more conventional, more 5-o'clock-tea-like than our conversation until—I don't know how it happened, but hear to what reckless lengths I went! Hear how I violated a fundamental principle of good form. I found myself actually reciting poetry! Yes, some lines from John Burroughs's beautiful 'Reverie;' do you remember it?

'Serene I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind or tide or sea;
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
For lo! my own shall come to me.

'I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid the eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face.

'The stars come nightly to the sky;
The tidal wave unto the sea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep nor high,
Can keep my own away from me.'

"Was it the moonlight shining in Beatrice's brown eyes, that stole the color from her face, and dancing on her lips and chin made them seem to tremble, to be set and firm, and then to tremble again?

"'Land from this deck forward, this deck forward! Madrid and Websterville!' rang through the steamer. Mr. and Mrs. Professor awoke cordial, good-natured, though hurried. They exclaimed, 'We make close connection here; our train is waiting; no, thank you, we need not trouble you for help about the luggage; it is to be sent on in the morning; we have arranged it. Delighted to have met you! Come and see us. Take time to visit our home. Don't forget!'

"The professor mentioned his name and address and bustled away repeating them over his shoulder. I watched them board their train. 'I shall follow them soon,' I thought. 'I will buy a mill, or some real estate, or part of a railway, or something of the kind at their town; something that at any time and for any length of time may be supposed to demand my presence there.' Gradually the crowd left the steamer landing, and I was alone with my thoughts.

"Suddenly those thoughts took so surprising a turn that I started violently and found myself falling—not heavily, but in a kind of collapse, into a crevasse between piles of luggage. I believe my first thought as I raised myself on my elbow was, 'This sort of thing maims but does not kill. I shall certainly have to drop off the landing and pretend that I can't swim. How can I go on living after having been such an insane imbecile! At least I needn't have any doubt as to where I had better go; I'll buy a ticket to the nearest nervine asylum. What, what was the name of that—er—that professor? Why didn't the man give me his card! Now I'm sure the town was Elmville. I'm not! Nothing of the kind! It might be Amesville, or Oakville, or good heavens, my mind is going! I think it ended in 'boro. Amesboro? That sounds like it. Elmsboro! perhaps, that's it. It may

have been Elmwood, or—or—I believe I shall have to hire a keeper. Oakwood? What absurd suburban town was it? I may as well decide what institution for mental treatment I had best enter. I suppose there's a choice of retreats, advantages in the way of a soothing climate, bracing diet, and attendants warranted not to go beyond one's depth in conversation. I wonder now if my wits are not equal to discovering that address? I might consult the United States Census Commissioner, or the Post-master-General. It would take some time to run over a list of the entire population of the United States. No, ours isn't a long-lived family; I won't try that. Or I might advertise—'Veranus Van Noon will learn something to his advantage if a stout gentleman passenger on the Yolande, with a geological note-book, a wife, and a daughter Beatrice, will forward to him his name and address. References exchanged.' That sounds well. I should know the name if—

"Just then, if you had been there, you might have thought my mind really was shattered. I exclaimed, I laughed, I danced about, and finally quieted down to take from my pocket a knife and a matchbox, and stealthily to kneel down by the trunk on which I had been sitting. I struck a match and held it close to the card on the end of the trunk; then I groped my way to another and another. I crawled solemnly and silently from trunk to trunk. I read many names and knew that not one of them could be the one I sought; but at long intervals I found and, if it were on a card or a tag, cut off, an address which seemed familiar, which might be the professor's. But I had lost confidence in myself; I could not be certain; I hesitated over various trunks hailing from all parts of the country, and burglarized several cards with a trembling hand.

"Considerably past midnight a suspicious-looking individual presented himself at the Barnes House, Madrid. His face was streaked with dust; chalk-marks and patches of dust nearly covered his clothes; one cuff was gone, the other hung limp, detached and dusky, over one hand; his necktie was askew; his hat was battered and bent. He reached with a grimy hand for the hotel pen. He had no luggage except a field-glass strapped

over one shoulder, and in one hand a silver match-box, open and empty, and some dilapidated bits of cardboard.

"The night clerk eyed him and his signature askance. 'Can't accommodate you, Mr. Van Noon; every room is taken,' he said.

"'Oh, yes you can,' I protested. 'Give me the governor's suite, or the bridal suite, or something similarly magnificent, if you've nothing else. I don't mind; I'm not particular. And I want you to send me up a lunch and a clothes-brush and a railway guide.'

"'Porter,' said the clerk; so I had to take out my pocketbook, tenderly put away my precious bits of cardboard, produce my checks and my bankbook, and otherwise satisfy him of my identity and my financial, if not my mental, soundness.

"I stayed at the Barnes House two weeks, writing letters, reading directories, and maturing my plan of action. What that plan of action was and how it succeeded I can't tell you better than by reading you this diary which I kept during the next few weeks:

SEPT. 12, MADRID.—When I find Beatrice we shall enjoy reading together this account of my travels. I should like her to see with what determination and devotion I seek her. It occurs to me, too, that her father may have determined to accept for his daughter no suitor who has not demonstrated that he can earn a living. Financial reverses may, of course, come to any one. He may, in spite of my present income, wish assurance of my general ability and business talent. Now the record of my methodical and well-considered search will testify in my favor. If I find Beatrice in the face of such difficulties no guardian need ask further credentials. I am now ready to begin my journey. I have provided myself with a tin box covered with Russian leather, bearing a padlock and a silver plate on which are engraved my name and permanent address. In this I shall carry this diary, my railway guide, and the document which contains my plan of travel. The first of the ten entries in that schedule reads as follows:

John J. York, No. 90 Winkle avenue, Euclidville, Pa., pages 3 to 7.

SEPT. 15.—Arrived at Euclidville; arrayed myself in calling costume; bought a dozen jacqueminots, and

drove with the best horse and carriage the town afforded, of course to 90 Winkle avenue. Mr. York was not at home. Inquired for Mrs. York. Informed that Mr. York is a bachelor! Left roses as a delicate expression of sympathy.

SEPT. 17, GREENWOOD, O.—Just returned from 107 Montague street. Inquired for Mr. Asa Wiggin. Out. Inquired for Mrs. Wiggin and sent up my card. Word returned, "Mrs. Wiggin does not know the gentleman. She does not wish to buy anything today." I inferred that my precious railway guide and diary depository, my valuable tin box, were viewed with suspicion as a case of patent medicines, or needles, or washing preparation. So I sent back word that though Mrs. Wiggin did not recognize my name, I had been introduced to her when she was travelling with her husband last August, and that I wished to see her on important business. The maid stayed in the parlor and kept an eye to the bric-a-brac while the cook delivered this message. The cook reported that Mrs. Wiggin is a confirmed invalid, and has not left Greenwood for two years. So I am wrong again: Wiggin is not the professor.

SEPT. 19. OAKWOOD, N. Y.—At 21 Gull avenue was received at once by Mr. Owen Riley. He was not the professor. He inquired what he could do for me. I said, "there is some mistake. I am sorry to have troubled you." He asked further explanation. I declined to say more, and was reluctantly permitted to leave the house. A person whom I fancy is Mr. Riley's coachman followed me to the hotel. If Mr. Riley has a burglar-alarm put on his house and hires a special night watchman on account of my suspicious appearance, I shall be sorry; and I should be quite willing to settle any expense he may be at in the matter if he would take it in the right spirit.

SEPT. 23, MAPLETON, MICH.—This suspense is wearing. I feel somewhat discouraged and ten years older. I quite expect that the next barber who shaves me will offer me a "Cure for Incipient Baldness," or a "Preventive of Wrinkles."

Mr. Peter V. Wilson of 26 Sugar Street, whom I just called on, was not the professor either. But when he inquired my errand I was prepared. I said, "I should like to take your subscription for a work I am preparing, a 'Compendium of Universal Knowledge.'" He said, "I have several such works. You will see three there in the bookcase; there is one behind the parlor door; we are pressing the cold corned beef

with one in the refrigerator, there is one in the baby's high chair in the dining-room. I'm always willing to help any one who is trying to earn an honest living. I really don't see just where we could put this volume of yours; still——" But I bowed myself out.

SEPT. 25, REEDVILLE, MINN.—The clerk at this hotel asked me what house I travel for.

Then he apologized. Said he was sorry to have vexed me, but the tags and placards and things on my valise gave him his impression. I tried some persons by the name of Goodenough to-day. Goodenough sounds to me like the professor's name. Mr. Goodenough was out. Mrs. G. received me cordially. She said, "I do not recall your name, but your face is familiar. I never forget a face. I am glad to see you again." Then she waited for me to explain myself. She evidently was one of those kind-hearted creatures who hate to hurt one's feelings by seeming not to remember one, and was pretending to recognize me, trusting that she could soon get a clew as to who I might be. Very amiable of her, but embarrassing for me, for she was not Mrs. Professor. I stammered that I had made a mistake. Then she bristled with amazement and suspicion, said this was an extraordinary proceeding, and that Mr. Goodenough——" I beat a hasty retreat. What did it matter what she thought, as long as she is not Beatrice or her mother?

SEPT. 26, EVANSBORO, ILL.—The bell-boy has just brought me this card, "Mr. N. Bonaparte Plunket." I do not know him. What does he want? Here is an opportunity for me to realize the sensations of the persons on whom I have lately called.

LATER.—This Mr. Plunket proved a queer fellow.

He wore a long, loose, plaid overcoat of the fashion of some years back, and not a specially good fashion then, and a broad, black felt hat, which he evidently considered safe nowhere but on his head, for he did not take it off. I recalled my own recent embarrassment at both cool and cordial receptions, so I said, non-committally, "Will you sit down, Mr. Plunket? I think I have seen you before, but I may be mistaken."

"I am a detective," said he.

I eyed him calmly and replied, "I expected you."

"Did you, indeed? And why?" exclaimed Mr. Plunket.

"Oh, on general principles," I returned. "You have a theory about me. You want an explanation. You no doubt hail from Euclidville or Greenwood, or Oakwood, or Mapleton, or Reedville, or——"

"All of them," interrupted Mr. Plunket.

"Now," I went on, "I am travelling for pleasure. I am also engaged in certain genealogical researches. I can refer you to reliable persons who will vouch for my honesty and sanity. Beyond this I do not propose to enlighten you."

"Oh, I know all about you, Mr. Van Noon. For instance, your diary begins, 'When I find Beatrice, we shall enjoy reading together this account of my travels,'" said the detective.

"You are evidently an expert in your profession," I remarked. Perhaps he felt the contempt which I could not keep out of my voice, though I did not wish to treat him discourteously. Perhaps it was the warmth of his overcoat and his absurd felt hat—his face flushed, and he went on hurriedly: "You know I had to know about your plan of travel—I'll explain later. Just now I want to say that all the other addresses which you intend to look up are incorrect. Yes, I know what I'm talking about. In this envelope you will find the right address. You will see that the professor lives in a surburb of this city. If—if his daughter accepts you, I have only to ask that you make an appointment to meet me here. A note directed to me at this hotel will reach me. Good evening, Mr. Van Noon, I—I wish you success with all my heart." And before I could thank him or offer him my hand, that plaid overcoat had flashed across the room, flapped against the door, and I was alone.

From the envelope I took a card, very like those I had collected from the trunks on that memorable night, on which was written "Horatio N. Burnham Broct—" The rest of the address was torn off, but on a slip of paper on which the card was pasted, in the same hand in which Mr. Plunket's card was written, was written: "Horatio N. Burnham, 209 Chester Avenue, Brocton, Ill. Take street car from Boxwood Square, or trains run from C. & B. railroad station every hour."

OCT. 11, EVANSBORO.—This diary which I have kept for Beatrice is nearly finished. I hope—Heaven help me to be worthy of it!—that the history of the rest of my life may be the history, too, of hers. I have not tried here to write the record of the past two weeks: it is known to Beatrice and as for me it is written in my heart.

Here is the card of Mr. N. Bonaparte Plunket, and here at the door is himself.

LATER.—As he entered the room, Mr. Plunket said eagerly, "I received your note. What news, Mr. Van Noon?"

I hastened to meet him and to say, "Mr. Plunket, I am yours to command. What can I do for you in return for the great service you have done me? Will you be perfectly frank? It will give me the greatest pleasure to serve you in any way I can. Beatrice has accepted me; Mr. and Mrs. Burnham have accepted me on probation. Now I—oh, you are very kind!"

The detective had seized both my hands and he surprised me by saying, "I am very glad for you, Mr. Van Noon. I can't tell you how happy I am to be able to congratulate you! And—and—yes, whatever happens in regard to myself I am delighted to have been able to help you in this matter. Now, I have an explanation to make."

He had refused my gesture begging him to sit, and stood with his back to the light looking at me with an odd, half-wistful, half-defiant expression from under the shadow of his eccentric hat.

"You know," he began, "a great many papers come into my hands in the way of my profession. Will you read this letter aloud, please?"

I took the letter, "My own, written not three months ago; I do not understand; well, I'll read it, if you like. 'My dear Bertha, remember, dear little girl, that I am writing to my ward as well as to my only sister. I cannot consent to your marrying Mr. Leander Pitcher. I have inquired about him. I find, I must admit, that he is a young man of unexceptional character, and that his father's fortune provides him with sufficient means to marry. But you know, Bertha, in America it is three generations from shirtsleeves to shirtsleeves. I have always thought that a man of inherited fortune should fit himself to earn a living if necessary. I have no immediate intention of marrying, but I have thought of it in the abstract. Should I ever marry, I intend to demonstrate to the satisfaction of those concerned that were I thrown on my own resources I should be equal to the emergency. I find that this young Mr. Pitcher is (like myself, I confess) an idler. He may, of course (you will, I trust, excuse my frankness) develop more ability; more, if I may say so, brains than I see any special evidence of now.

'The young man called on me. He is evidently a gentleman. You are both young. I may see reason to change my mind before you come of age. In that case, I shall hasten to give my consent to your marriage. When you are of age you will, of course, do as you please. At present I must ask you to accept my decision. I am, very affectionately yours,

'VERANUS VAN NOON.'

"It is a sufficiently cold-blooded and priggish letter, Mr. Plunket, but——"

"Excuse me," interrupted the detective, "will you read these lines?—from your diary, I believe."

I read, "If I find Beatrice in the face of such difficulties, no guardian need ask for further credentials." I recognized the quotation, and guessed vaguely at its application to the matter in hand. "You found her, Mr. Plunket," I began. "I can't give you Beatrice, but—good heavens!"

The detective cast away his hat, with one writhe slipped from his overcoat, and picked up his card from the table and threw it into the fire. He stood there, a good-looking, well-dressed young man, very much flushed and laughing nervously. "Yes," he said, "it's Leander Pitcher. I was awfully cut up when you did not think me good enough to marry Bertha. You're quite right. I'm not worthy of her. But now, perhaps you will—I——"

We shook hands, and he went on: "Ah, thank you. I promise you shan't be sorry. Well, I'll tell you about it. I really did start out as a private detective in a way. We suspected one of the men in my father's counting-house of embezzling. I offered to find out something of his outside life, for we'd no clew, no well-defined reason for suspecting him. I thought I might as well go to work on that as anything. I should feel differently now. I should try something more suitable, more in earnest. I thought our man would be on that steamboat where I saw you, but I missed him.

"I recognized you. I sat opposite you at dinner. I wonder that you did not recognize me, for all my queer duster and eye glasses, though you had only seen me once, to be sure. I should not have felt so safe in watching you if I had not seen that you had eyes for only one person.

"Since then I have travelled all over the country shadowing you. I heard Mr. Burnham—by the way, he isn't a professor, is he?—profession of real estate, isn't it?—I heard him give you his name, but I did not catch the address. I found a clew to the address, however, on the card I gave you—one that you overlooked. Up to the time that I gave it to you a fortnight ago I was busy tracing 'Horatio N. Burnham, Broct—' out, and making sure I had the right man before I told you about it.

"I just steeped my soul in deceit, I assure you, to gain an entrance into your room to copy your precious plan of travel. What a tour we've had!"

"And now we'll have a double wedding," said I.

Two hours later we sent these telegrams to my sister Bertha:

"Your brother is a trump. It is all right. Miss Burnham has accepted him. He has accepted me. Will write. LEANDER PITCHER."

"To Bertha—Accept a sister's love and an invitation to visit me as soon and as long as you can.

"BEATRICE BURNHAM."

"Pitcher and I have settled all but the date. You and Beatrice must agree on that. Will explain.

"V. VAN NOON."

As Veranus finished reading the diary, William Perry's mother and Mrs. Van Noon came in, and Bertha and Leander Pitcher stood in the doorway, as blithe and happy and heart-warming a young couple as ever was seen; Mrs. Van Noon found a pen and ink, and handing them to her husband, said, "Now end the diary and the story, with 'we had a double wedding, and happily finished our bridal trips by a cruise with our friends in the yacht Eloise.'"

The mystery is not fully explained—if it were it would not be a mystery—but electricity, about which people knew even less one hundred years ago than they do to-day, had something to do with it. The story was written by Andrée Hope for *Macmillan's Magazine*.

A MYSTERY OF OLD GRAY'S INN.

A WHITE mist had been hanging about the town all day, wrapping the narrow streets in a dank embrace that caused moisture to ooze from every wall and to drip from every projecting eave. But as the dusk of evening came creeping on, this chill and shadowy vapor changed into a thick yellow fog, and then object after object became engulfed in the gathering darkness —a darkness little dispelled by the dim light of the few oil lamps slung at rare intervals from house to house, whose smoky flames were to-night rendered still more dim than usual, obscured as they were by the heavy fog and by the slanting veil of rain that began to fall with slow but steady persistency.

As ill-paved as they were ill-lighted, the streets in this quarter of the great city were, about the beginning of the present century, not only disagreeable but even dangerous to traverse after nightfall. Few respectable persons cared to venture on foot or alone into the intricate maze of lanes and alleys that abutted on the principal thoroughfares, for less than a hundred years ago these narrow and tortuous passages were mostly given up to thieves and cut-throats, and to the midnight roysterers whose savage pranks the aged watchmen of those days sought to escape from rather than to check.

On the night in question, therefore, the best class of shops in Chancery Lane had been closed when the darkening atmosphere had warned their owners that the nominal day was over; and at length even the necessitous and hopeful little stationer gave up all chance of a stray customer, and, leaving with a sigh any farther inspection of his unsatisfactory ledger, prepared to put up his shutters and seek some solace for slackness of trade in the warmth of his tiny back parlor.

He was stooping beneath his counter, when a sharp rap on it caused him to start up. A gentleman had entered unobserved, and was standing beside the desk.

"You let chambers in Gray's Inn, I believe?" inquired the new comer.

"Well, sir," said the stationer dubiously, "I do not in a general way let chambers [he had never let any], but I know a great deal about them, and can offer you as good a choice as any one in the neighborhood."

"Ah! indeed," said the gentleman in a voice as chilly as the weather; adding, after a moment's pause and in a dreamy tone as if he had been thinking of something else, "Have you any to let in an uninhabited house?"

"Well, you see, sir," replied the agent, somewhat puzzled by the demand, "gentlemen who don't wish for no others in a house mostly take whole houses and not chambers. Gray's Inn isn't much of a place for families. Chambers come expensive; so our business gentlemen as a rule find two or three rooms enough for their work."

"I require," said the new comer in a low, almost sepulchral voice, "a basement set, and two or three rooms above; and I should prefer a house where there are no other inhabitants, or at any rate where there are but few."

Now there was something in these inquiries that considerably disturbed the nervous shop-keeper. The customer's manner of speech was peculiar, his appearance even more so. He had removed his hat, disclosing thereby a singularly pale and careworn countenance. Dark circles, denoting either severe illness or much study, and possibly both, surrounded large deep-set eyes that gleamed with strange unearthly fire beneath heavy overhanging brows. The massive square chin was closely shaven. The hair was thrown back from the lofty forehead, and, though now wet from the rain that had fallen upon it, had evidently earlier in the day been carefully dressed and powdered. The whole attire, though splashed and muddy, was that of a man of some position; nevertheless, there was something about it, both in material and fashion, that was not usual. Still more unusual was his speech, each word being

said slowly and distinctly as if a lesson carefully learned was being cautiously repeated.

"I came to you," continued the gentleman, speaking always in the same deep voice and with the same measured accents, "because your shop being a small one you have probably not much business, and will therefore have more leisure to attend to mine. I do not seek large or fashionable rooms. In this noisy town I wish for chambers that are secluded and therefore quiet. Should you be able to find me such as I desire, I am willing to pay you double the usual commission. To-day is Tuesday. Can you undertake to show me such chambers as I have described on Friday?"

Now had it not been for the temptation held out by the double fee it is possible the stationer might have declined this commission. Those were days of anxiety and trouble, when all strangers were regarded with suspicion. There was treason in the air, and to the mass of the people the very name of foreigner signified spy or Jacobin. Mr. Kitway was timid in the extreme, and mentally shuddered at such ugly words as treason and traitors, revolt or revolution. Not only the British Constitution, but that ancient Inn of Court, the venerable Gray's Inn itself, might be shaken, if not destroyed, were blood-thirsty foreigners allowed to enter such sacred precincts. The more Mr. Kitway looked at his new customer, the longer he listened to the strange voice, the more decided became his trepidation and his dislike. A nervous tremor came over him each time he met those basilisk eyes, and whenever the gentleman drew near the other as invariably retreated. But the double fee was a consideration not to be disregarded, for the little man's business was as small as himself, and, poor fellow, he had a sickly wife and four hungry children, whose ever open mouths clamored for the food it was so hard to provide. To add to his troubles a fifth baby was now expected, and there were but few shillings in the till wherewith to make preparations for the new comer, or to provide the ailing mother with the comforts she sorely needed.

So Mr. Kitway made an effort, and overcoming both his dislike and his distrust, assured his client he would

be prepared on Friday to show him sundry chambers in the quietest parts of the Inn.

"On Friday, then," repeated the gentleman; he was preparing to leave the shop, when Mr. Kitway, drawing out his day-book, requested to know the name and address of the applicant.

"Quite unnecessary, quite unnecessary," returned the stranger hurriedly. "I will return on Friday and see the rooms." He closed the door hastily as he spoke, and in another instant had disappeared in the gloom of the fog.

On the following day Mr. Kitway betook himself to the best agents in the neighborhood, but he soon found that the task he had undertaken was no easy one. A tenant who had given neither name nor address was not likely to be favorably received by either agents or owners of the best houses. Indeed so popular was this then celebrated Inn of Court, that but few sets of chambers were ever vacant. Vainly did Mr. Kitway address himself to every agent in the neighborhood; no such rooms as he required could be found. Wearied by his long walk and his fruitless exertions, and provoked with himself for having wasted so much time, he at length abandoned farther search and turned his steps homeward.

The fog still hung heavy over the town although the sun had been making many, and mostly unsuccessful efforts, to pierce the dense atmosphere. But between sun and fog the weather was close and oppressive, so the vexed and heated little man halted for a moment in Field Court, and leaning against the great gates that closed the entrance to the gardens, took off his hat and wiped his fevered brow. As he did so, one of the shabby old women who haunt the Inns of Court and other bachelor residences, issued from an opposite house.

"Deary me, Mr. Kitway, but you do look warm this nasty close morning. What have you been a-doin' of to get yourself in such a pother?"

"I've been and gone and walked myself pretty nigh off my legs, Mrs. Mimms; that's what I've been a-doin' of, and a fool I am for my pains. That's about it," returned Mr. Kitway, polishing his face and

head until they absolutely shone again from the violence of the friction. "If you want to look at a born fool, look at me, Mrs. Mimms, trudging about for nigh upon four hours knocking at folks' doors, and leaving them larfin' like mad for hunting about Gray's Inn for an uninhabited house."

"What's that you're a-sayin', Mr. Kitway? An uninhabited house? Why, I know a house that's just exactly that—leastways only one man and two ghosts, or one ghost and two men live in it, so to speak."

"Well, now, if that ain't curious! Here have I been hunting high and low all for nothing, and then the first word you say tells me what I want. Come along, there's a good soul, and show it to me this minute."

"Well, but, Mr. Kitway, it's an uncommon nasty house."

"It's an uncommon nasty man as wants it," retorted Mr. Kitway, turning round to look into the gardens as he spoke. As he did so he started violently.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated in considerable confusion and even alarm, "if the gentleman isn't sitting there under Lord Bacon's tree. He must have heard every word I've said!"

"Matthew Kitway," said Mrs. Mimms with much severity, "I'm ashamed o' you. I'm right down ashamed o' you! Though it's so early, you're in liquor. Can't you see them gates is locked, and not a soul in them gardens? There ain't nobody under that there tree, nor can't be neither. I always took you for an uncommon steady good sort o' man, Matthew Kitway, and though a poor suffering crittur like me is forced to take a drop sometimes to keep the cold out and the life in my poor legs, there's no call for your being taken like that at this time o' day."

The abashed Mr. Kitway took another turn with the handkerchief at his head and face, including his eyes this time in the energetic friction. When after this vigorous process he looked again at the tree, he perceived clearly that no one was there, although he fancied he could distinguish the figure of a tall man retreating toward the steps at the farther extremity of the gardens. He took good care, however, not to mention this fact to Mrs. Mimms.

"I suppose I'm a bit nervous and upset," said he apologetically. "I've been up pretty well all night. The poor missus gets worse and worse every day, so what with that, and the four children having the whooping cough, it isn't much sleep as I gets."

"Such is the joys o' matrimony," remarked Mrs. Mimms philosophically. "Them as undertakes it must put up with the ill-conwenience, for them as marries does it for better for worse, and with us poor folk it allers seems to me there's a deal more worse than better about the business. But come along now, and have a look at this house, for I've something else to do besides fooling here."

So saying, Mrs. Mimms turned out of Field Court, passed through the narrow passage, or rather paved yard, of Gray's Inn Place, and then skirting the gardens entered the broad quiet street called Raymond's Buildings. Here the tall dark brick houses were stately and handsome, and the situation was remarkably pleasant, for the windows on one side looked upon the beautiful gardens. Entering one of these houses Mrs. Mimms ascended the stairs more swiftly than might have been expected from a lady of her size and years, and then turning a key in a door of an upper story motioned Mr. Kitway to enter.

"I'll sit down here while you look about you," said she. "The staircase is steep and my legs ain't long, nor is my breath what it used to be."

Mr. Kitway entered, opened the shutters and looked about him. The rooms were spacious and would have been cheerful, had not the light been obscured, not only by the branches of the trees that grew too closely before the windows, but by the windows themselves being dim with dust and dirt. Dust lay thick upon floor, cornice, and every projecting ledge, and the air was heavy besides with the faint musty smell invariably found in places long untenanted and neglected. The old boards creaked unpleasantly beneath Mr. Kitway's nervous footsteps, and odd little noises came whispering mysteriously through every keyhole, and between every interstice of the mouldering woodwork. He therefore hurriedly completed his inspection and hastened to rejoin Mrs. Mimms, rubbing his hands

with much apparent satisfaction at having been so far successful in his search.

"Now for the chambers below," said he cheerfully to his conductress, who did not, however, say much in reply to his eulogiums on the rooms they had left. "Now for those in the basement, and we shall be suited to a T."

The basement chambers were not so satisfactory as those above; they were dark, damp, and mouldy, with a strong odor of rats and distinct proofs of black beetles. Still the little man thought that the quiet and seclusion would compensate in his strange customer's eyes for these small discomforts, and, taking a grateful farewell of his guide, he proceeded homeward fairly satisfied with his morning's work.

Bad as the weather had been on the previous occasion, it was as nothing compared to the storm of wind and rain that raged when the stranger presented himself on the ensuing Friday evening at Mr. Kitway's shop. That nervous little man had indulged in the hope that so formidable a tempest might induce the Unknown to defer his visit. But no; on the day and at the hour agreed upon the shop-bell tinkled, and the customer again appeared.

"You have succeeded?" he inquired, speaking in that cold, calm, and passionless voice, whose tones had already produced so unpleasant an effect on the nerves of the timid man. This time the effect was even more disagreeable than before; but there was something so commanding in the accents of that quiet voice that although Mr. Kitway had in his own mind prepared sundry propositions with a view of putting off the visit of inspection to a more favorable moment, he now lacked courage to mention them, and felt himself compelled to obey without farther comment.

"We will go at once," said the Unknown.

Mr. Kitway hurriedly put on his overcoat, and took down his hat from its peg.

"You have a lantern?"

Mr. Kitway dived into the kitchen, and returned with the article in question.

"The keys?"

"I have them," shortly replied the usually loqua-

cious stationer; but somehow he was conscious that his own will had faded away, and he could but obey his queer customer in every respect.

Without more words the gentleman opened the door and passed into the street. Through mud, wind, and rain the strange pair plodded on. In such weather scarce a soul was abroad; not a human being could be seen in the whole length of Raymond's Buildings, and not a light gleamed from one of its windows. The quiet in the street below was deathlike; but high overhead the branches of the trees could be heard creaking wildly as they were tossed to and fro by the fitful violence of the gale. A dismal welcome to a new dwelling!

On arriving at their destination, one of the last houses in the row, they found that a couple of dim lamps hanging on the walls partially lessened the obscurity of the staircase. Having mounted to the upper story Mr. Kitway hurriedly put the key into the lock, eager to introduce the intending tenant to his new abode; he was in fact desperately anxious to get the business over, and to escape to the safety and warmth of his own fireside. The fierce roaring of the wind and the dismal rushing of the rain had already shaken the little courage with which nature had endowed him, and he was now fairly scared by the darkness and lonesomeness of the desolate house.

Scarcely had they entered the chambers than a sharp gust of wind caused the door to close suddenly behind them, while a rattling peal of thunder broke right over the house, making it shake to its very foundations. At the same instant a stream of lightning filled the room with blue and lurid light, and falling full upon the face of the Unknown, it cast so terrible and ghastly a pallor upon every feature that timid Mr. Kitway was completely overcome. In overpowering terror he staggered back against the wall, letting the lantern fall from his hand with another startling crash.

"Lor-a-mercy, sir!" said the poor little fellow struggling to regain his composure. "I humbly begs your pardon, but I really thought your honor was the devil. I hope your honor will excuse the liberty I take in mentioning the likeness."

"No apologies, I beg," replied the stranger, speaking with his usual chill composure. "No doubt," added he, with a low scornful laugh that infinitely increased his companion's terror, "the resemblance is flattering, and I appreciate the compliment. These rooms will suit me. Should the basement do as well I will take the chambers, or indeed the whole house."

Now it had been disagreeable to go up-stairs, but it was far more so to have to inspect the lower rooms, where Mr. Kitway knew that there were myriads of black beetles, and feared not only rats but ghosts. However, there was no help for it; the stranger meant to go, and go they did.

Most ghostly and uninviting did these underground places appear when the door was opened. At least half a dozen huge rats scudded off to as many holes, while the floor was absolutely blackened by the swarms of beetles that were crawling over it. But neither of rats nor of insects did the intending tenant take much heed. The thickness of the walls, the strength of beams, the size and construction of the chimneys were the object of his closest and most careful scrutiny. After an examination that seemed to his companion to have lasted hours, the gentleman declared himself satisfied, and demanded the name of the agent.

On returning again to the street Mr. Kitway once more ventured to ask the name and address of his customer, but the latter either did not hear, or gave no heed to the question. He placed a guinea in the hand of the stationer saying, "For the trouble you have already had. Should I arrange satisfactorily with the agents you will receive your commission with the extra fee I mentioned."

He drew his cloak closely around him as he spoke, and in another minute disappeared, or, as Mr. Kitway expressed it, faded away in the gloom.

Comforted by the consciousness of the golden coin safely deposited in a secure pocket Mr. Kitway made the best of his way home, the lantern being eminently useful in showing him the numerous holes and deep pools of mud that made walking a matter of some danger.

After this, days and weeks passed, and he heard no

more either of the chambers or of their proposed tenant. He received the promised fee, and that fact, combined with the arrival of many workpeople, made him conclude they had been taken. Nevertheless he was still unacquainted with the name of his client, nor could he learn anything respecting him. It was irritating, it was mortifying. The inquiries he from time to time ventured to make were fruitless; the workpeople employed were foreigners, strange, stern men with gleaming eyes and great beards, who either did not know, or professed not to know anything. All Mr. Kitway could ascertain was, that innumerable wires, inclosed in metal or other pipes, were hung in and about the walls of the various rooms. Even these were at length finished, and appeared in perfect order. The rooms were furnished; precautions had been taken against the inroads of rats and black beetles; all was ready for the arrival of the new tenant. But he did not come; the expected master did not appear. Mrs. Mimms was occasionally sent to dust and clean, but she could tell nothing to curious neighbors, for there was nothing to tell.

Then, long before curiosity was satisfied, rumors arose, ugly rumors that were circulated with bated breath. Doubtless this unknown tenant who so strangely held himself aloof was a spy, a political spy, even now in prison probably for heinous offences against the Government. Already did Mr. Kitway quake with fear lest his connection with such a wretch should be established; when one day without warning, without saying whence he had come or how he had come, the strange customer was established in Raymond's Buildings—he and his servant. And this servant proved to be even more alarming than his reserved and mysterious master. He was a being stricken by misfortune, deformed and dumb. It was asserted that he had no tongue, but his hearing was perfect and when angered he would utter a low growl like that of a wild animal. One may imagine the terror he excited among the hordes of children that swarmed in this poor neighborhood, especially as, when irritated, his eyes would flash with a rage that bordered on insanity.

Master and man, therefore, were equally disliked and

equally shunned. Little, however, did either heed dislike or avoidance. They sufficed for each other, though what might be the bond that bound them together none knew. They were never seen together. No one had ever penetrated into their dwelling. Neither visitor nor letter came there, nor were the bells so carefully arranged ever heard to ring. What could be the employment that engrossed their days? And what were they doing of the nights! Whoever had sufficient courage to linger near that gloomy basement might have heard strange sounds during the night, especially at those times when storms of wind or rain deadened other noises. Then did the strange tenant and his man appear busily occupied. A pungent and unpleasant smell of chemical preparations would filter through the interstices of the doors, closely fitting though they were, while vivid streams of light would flash through them accompanied by the faint tinkle of metals struck together, and followed by low moans, or by sobs both grievous and heart-rending, as if wrung from some creature in mortal pain. What could these things mean?

There was but one other dweller in this apparently deserted house. The attic rooms were occupied by a poor student, a young fellow whose whole soul was devoted to the study of the law. Rarely was his mind free from the work of unravelling some knotty and abstruse point of his difficult profession. Little he thought or cared of those who might be dwelling beneath the same roof as himself.

The other rooms bore an evil reputation, as Mrs. Mimms had hinted to Mr. Kitway. A wretched man, exhausted by too much study, heart-sickened by failure, overwhelmed by the drear solitude of a lonely and hopeless life, had here destroyed himself. For two days his door had been closed, and had so remained unheeded, for there were none to care for the solitary and poverty-stricken creature. On the third day the lock was forced, and then the horrified spectators shrank back in affright, for directly facing them was the miserable suicide, who, with staring eyes and tongue half bitten through, was hanging from the post of his own bed. Ever after did the unquiet spirit

haunt those ill-omened chambers; and though many tenants had essayed to occupy them, none would long remain, for mocking laughs came from the place where the dreadful deed had been committed, while unearthly whispers and heart-broken sighs banished all hope of sleep.

Severe were the strictures passed by Mrs. Mimms on this unhappy ghost. "Give me," said the worthy soul, "good, solid flesh and blood. A wooden leg is a nat'ral infirmity and so must be put up with, but who wants the thread-paper insides of people who choose to go out of the world for their own conwenience? If they've no call to stop here, why do they come back when their company is not requested? Live and let live is my motter, and if you ain't alive yourself, why go and worrit them as is? For I've never heard tell," concluded Mrs. Mimms triumphantly, "that a ghost ever gave nothink to nobody." Such powerful arguments were unanswerable, and henceforward Mrs. Mimms' mysterious headshakings and gloomy mutterings were accepted as indisputable evidences against the unknown tenant and his servant.

But before long far more pressing anxieties led to their being forgotten.

These were troubled times. The expenses of a long war had impoverished the country, and rumors of still heavier taxation agitated and alarmed all classes. Trade was at a low ebb, and agricultural prospects were grievously depressed. A cold spring had been followed by an exceptionally dry summer. All too late to save the parched and thirsty crops rain ultimately fell with tropical violence, and was succeeded by a heat that would have been wealth at an earlier season. Now it did but draw dank and noisome vapors from the steaming earth. Pestilence was brooding over the land, and soon was heard the voice of Rachel weeping for her children. Gaunt Famine had long held sway in the squalid courts and ill-drained streets around Gray's Inn, and soon his partner, Disease, came to claim the victims already weakened by hunger and privation.

Now in these hours of suffering did the strange tenant awaken from his lethargy, and with no scanty liberality give generous aid. Nevertheless such aid was

partial and eccentric, and though abundantly bestowed upon children and young people, for the aged he had no sympathy. Besides, he and his servant alike inspired both terror and aversion, so gruesome was the aspect of the mute, so stern and pitiless were the regulations and treatment of the master. His medical skill was no doubt great, but his remedies were strange, and he brooked neither disobedience nor remonstrance. Thus his abundant gifts of medicine, wine, and even luxuries, were received ungratefully and regarded with suspicion.

More and more sultry did the weather become, until toward the end of August the heat seemed to have culminated in intensity. The atmosphere was heavy and stagnant. There was not a breath of air to bring relief to the gasping inhabitants of the narrow unsavory streets. A sickening vapor hung about most of the houses, and a faint nauseous smell, as of decaying vegetation, told again the oft-repeated tale why fever and death are the constant attendants on poverty and dirt.

Poor Mr. Kitway stood within his shop jaded and weary. From the little back parlor came the feeble cries of a sickly infant, mingled with the faint drone of Mrs. Kitway's voice as she tried to lull the child to sleep. On those doorsteps that he always tried to keep respectable, the other children were enjoying violent skirmishes among themselves, varied by occasional encounters with similarly-minded warlike boys. It was too hot to chastise the rioters; it was too depressing to work longer at his books. He would seek comfort in asking payment of a little bill; the few shillings so obtained would relieve his mind; a cool shady court might relieve his body. And so off he started, little heeding the threatening weather.

A storm was now indeed coming. Lower and lower were the lurid clouds descending over the half-stifled town, pressing around it, and darkening it as if with closing curtains. In Gray's Inn gardens not a leaf stirred; limp and shrivelled they hung half dead upon the trees. The birds wheeled uneasily to and fro with quick, anxious chirps. They knew some sinister influence was abroad, but at length even their twitterings ceased. Nature became ominously silent. Even

the roll of carts and carriages fell on the ear with a strangely muffled sound, so subdued was the habitual roar of the great capital beneath the weight of the mighty disturbance that was approaching. Occasional mutterings of distant thunder could be heard, but remote and broken, as if coming from some immense distance. Mr. Kitway fairly gasped for breath as he plodded slowly onward. The atmosphere was so charged with electricity that the very air was absorbed by the heated pavements and houses, till at last, when the sun became obscured by the gathering clouds, he paused in doubt whether he had not best return.

Even as he paused a roar of thunder like the shock of heavy artillery burst over his head, and a stream of forked lightning filled the street with its blue and livid glare. Half blinded, and wholly overwhelmed with terror, Mr. Kitway staggered to the nearest doorway, and in his panic crouched down beneath the narrow shelter of its portico. The long threatening storm had come, and had come in all its might of terrific power. The roll of thunder was incessant, and each stream of lightning was followed by the rattle of falling chimneys, the crash of stricken trees, and the screams of terrified women and children.

Suddenly, high above the roar of contending elements, piercing through all other noises, came a wild and maddened yell. Once again it rose, and yet again. None but a tortured human being could have uttered that shriek of deadly agony.

Forgetful of his own terror, the good little man rushed to aid. He could not hear such sounds unmoved. Others joined him. In a few seconds they were at Raymond's Buildings. Again the cry arose, but this time fainter, weaker, with the sob of expiring life. It came from the area chambers belonging to the strange tenant. The door was fastened; but those who had now arrived were resolved to enter. Fiercely they beat upon the panels; loudly they demanded admittance. Their calls were unheeded. All was quiet within, with the silence of death. Was he who had so suffered indeed dead? Those without resolved to know. With increased violence they struck the door. At length a slight tinkling noise was heard, as if metal

substances were being cautiously moved. Slow steps approached. The lock was turned, and the unknown tenant stood before them. His saturnine countenance was pale to lividness, but in his deep-set, brilliant eyes there shone a strange and unnatural joy, and around his stern mouth there hovered a grim smile.

"Will you inform me, gentlemen, why you thus invade my privacy?" said the stranger in his customary grave and composed manner. "It seems that for some reason you wish to enter. Pray do so, although your visit is inopportune, for my servant has met with an accident."

The gloomy day made the gloomy room still more sombre of aspect, and what little light might have found its way in was shut out by closely-drawn blinds, nevertheless there was sufficient to enable those who entered to perceive a figure stretched upon an opposite couch, a figure that shocked and startled them with both fear and horror. It was the unhappy mute; and so rigidly motionless did he lie that, but for a rare convulsive movement, it might have been supposed that life had already departed. His master's cloak had been thrown over him, and his head and face were only partially visible; but the eyes of the spectators fixed at once with horrified intensity upon a ghastly wound in the neck, from which the blood was rapidly welling. The dreadful stream had flowed down upon the floor, forming a dark and hideous pool into which the crimson drops were falling fast and heavily.

For a second the new comers were petrified by the shocking sight; then one of them started forward to the side of the sufferer. "Merciful Heaven, man!" he cried, "are you doing nothing to staunch this deadly wound? This poor wretch is dying from loss of blood!" Even as he spoke he hurriedly endeavored to check the flow of blood by drawing together the sides of the terrible gash.

"Quick, quick," he again cried eagerly, "a surgeon! Let some one seek a surgeon without more loss of time."

But the Unknown had now approached his servant, and was bending over him with an expression of anxious care—an expression of loving as well as of anxious

care, though strange gleams of pleasure mingled with this anxiety, singular enough on a countenance usually so calm and impassive. When, however, he heard these words he raised himself to his full height.

"Stay!" he said with commanding dignity to the man who was preparing to leave the room. "No surgeon is required. I myself understand the art. My poor fellow's blood has been allowed to flow to relieve his brain. It is now time to dress the wound." So saying he quietly put aside the first speaker. With the skilled hand of a practised surgeon he drew the cut together, applied the dressings that lay ready on a neighboring table, then covered the throat with a thick poultice of moist and cooling leaves.

"An accident has befallen him," he continued, calmly turning to the astonished bystanders, and as he did so glancing casually at a mass of broken glass that lay scattered around. "But no great harm has been done," he added, as he proceeded to administer with the utmost caution some reviving drops to the injured man.

The poor fellow opened his eyes and looked with fond affection into his master's face. His pale lips sought to kiss the hand that was ministering to him; then they parted, and with an unearthly rattle in the throat he uttered some hideous inarticulate sounds, more resembling the cries of a stricken animal than the words of a human voice. Then sinking back, he lapsed again into partial unconsciousness.

Tears stood in the cold, hard eyes of his master; but as he heard this frightful effort at speech, a gleam of inexpressible delight passed over his stern countenance.

"Gentlemen," he said, turning once more to those around, "I must beg you will at once leave us. I thank you for your sympathy and intended help, but the reason, perhaps even the life, of my servant depends upon his remaining perfectly quiet and undisturbed."

As the Unknown spoke he moved toward the door, and so dignified was his manner, so commanding was his voice, that those who heard could not but obey. Slowly did each man prepare to leave the room. Mr. Kitway was the last.

"Stay," said the strange tenant as his eye fell upon his wondering and inquisitive face; "stay, you may be of use. Remain here to-night, and I will pay you well."

The little man started in alarm as he heard these words. His heart leaped into his mouth (so he said), for great as was his curiosity, his fears were yet greater. Nevertheless he dared not refuse a request that was well-nigh an order; and so sorely did he need the proffered pay! Tacitly therefore did he assent, though his alarm was not decreased when he saw the Unknown lock and double lock the door. However, necessity gives courage even to cowards, and Mr. Kitway was no exception to the rule. So, emboldened by this stern necessity, and also encouraged by the promised reward, he became, as he afterward expressed it, equal to the occasion, and rose superior to adverse circumstaces. The numerous duties incidental to a sick-room kept him fully occupied for many hours, and his kind heart and ready obedience made him in fact very useful. At length the good little fellow was so overcome by the unwonted fatigue that, whenever he had a few minutes' respite and could approach a distant chair, he seated himself to think, he said, of course not to sleep. Sleep indeed fled from him. The faint glimmer of the shaded light sent only pale shadows into the remote portions of the cavernous room, leaving many corners in deep obscurity. But when Mr. Kitway gazed intently into these dark corners, they seemed peopled with strange shapes and formless objects. Eyes would stare at him from these mystic depths, warning voices would at times murmur in his ear.

The actual storm had now passed away, but the heavy rain that followed had not sensibly diminished the intense heat. The rain was gradually subsiding, and the steady drop, drop of the departing shower made a species of soothing lullaby. So at last Mr. Kitway fell into a sort of troubled slumber; though, seated on an uneasy chair, his head falling sometimes forward, sometimes backward, his limbs jerking about from the discomforts of his position, such a sleep brought but little rest. It was suddenly and fearfully broken. Again had that awful cry been uttered, and its agonized tones seemed still to vibrate around the darkened room!

Nevertheless the strange master was bending with anxious intentness over the sufferer, renewing with skilful and tender hand the applications that cooled the burning wound. Love and gratitude beamed in the eyes of the injured man. It could not have been he who had uttered that piercing cry! Mr. Kitway felt his brain was reeling under the unwonted and accumulating terrors of the night. Great as was his dread of his enforced companions, sounds such as these, combined with the vague visions that flitted around him, were to his now alarmed imagination too insupportable to be endured at a distance. Cautiously, therefore, he drew near the couch, and seated himself in a dusky corner behind the master.

Again the sufferer stirred and feebly moaned. The Unknown rose to administer some calming medicine. As he did so the cloak that covered the wounded man became disarranged, and to Mr. Kitway's horror he perceived that the lower limbs of the unhappy patient were securely strapped to the couch.

This cruel sight completed the almost insane terror of the unfortunate assistant. With clasped hands and streaming eyes he fell at the feet of the mysterious Being whose proceedings appeared to him so dreadful, and in feeble and broken accents entreated to be relieved from further attendance. He asked no pay, only to be permitted to return home.

The Unknown looked at him with a kindness and a compassion rare to so grim a countenance. "Poor fellow," he said with contemptuous pity, "of course you are tired. The dawn has come; you can go. I am indebted to you for the assistance you have given. Take this," he continued, putting some coins into his hand, "as payment for your trouble. But," he added, his face resuming all its wonted sternness, "remember! Silence, absolute silence as to all you have seen and heard here. To-day is Saturday; return next Saturday and every succeeding Saturday, and you will receive a similar sum; but utter one word, give one hint respecting circumstances that do not concern yourself, and be you where you may, go where you will, rest assured I will cause you to be in far worse plight than was ever my poor servant."

As he spoke, the Unknown fixed his cold, gleaming eyes on trembling Mr. Kitway with so baneful an expression that his knees fairly knocked together with excess of terror, and his blood seemed to curdle in his veins.

"The day has come," continued the singular Being unlocking the door. "You can depart; but again I warn you. Remember! Silence and discretion!"

Mr. Kitway staggered up the steps, and got into the street more dead than alive.

Toward the east pale pink clouds were floating across the sky. The air, refreshed by the recent storm, came sweet and pure from the distant Surrey hills, bringing with it the delicious perfume of fragrant grass and flowers. Rooks cawed from the higher branches of the trees, while innumerable sparrows twittered from each roof and eave. An imprisoned lark forgot its wearisome captivity, and fluttering eagerly in its little cage poured forth its trilling gushes of song to greet the coming day. The mighty capital still slept, and scarce a chimney sent its smoke to defile the now clean and transparent atmosphere. The morning star lingered as if loath to bid farewell to earth, although already its radiance was fading in the glory of the rising sun. A subdued murmur, the rumble of heavy wagons, told that in neighboring markets provisions were already arriving to supply the wants of the great city.

Mr. Kitway, calmed and refreshed by the beauty of so sweet a morning, lingered on the way, not only to enjoy the freshness of the air, but also feeling somewhat reluctant to return to the narrow precincts of Chancery Lane, and there encounter the worrying duties that awaited his arrival at home. Besides, he had been out all night, and he was a little nervous whether even the money that he had brought would condone for so long an absence.

So he lingered, and went by way of Gray's Inn gardens. The gates were not open, but he stopped a moment to look into the cool and verdant glades. What was it that made him start back in sudden affright? He could have sworn that beneath Lord Bacon's celebrated tree, dimly seen amid the shadows cast by its

great branches, stood a tall man wrapped in the folds of a heavy cloak, and gazing steadfastly on something red that stained the massive trunk. Could that red be blood?

Slowly the man turned. The basilisk eyes fell full on Mr. Kitway. A hand was raised as if in menace, but the terrified stationer saw no more, he staggered back a few paces, stumbled and fell.

When he recovered sufficiently to be able to look again no figure was there, but the sun had now risen above the houses and was blending all surrounding objects in a flood of golden light.

It was long ere the Unknown's servant was again seen about the neighborhood. At length he did reappear, but how changed! Wan, pale and emaciated, he was but the ghost of his former self. All fierceness had left his eyes: with gentle kindness he approached those he had formerly shunned; and all remarked that, uncouth and gruesome as were his attempts at speech, the sounds he uttered had now some resemblance to the human voice. He much attached himself to a child to whom he had brought succor in illness, and the little one, with the tender compassion of childhood, constituted herself his firm friend. Fearlessly would she run to meet the poor distorted creature, and climbing upon his knee would pat his swarthy cheek with her tiny hand, and look lovingly into his kind, pathetic eyes.

Winter and spring had passed, and now sweet summer had come again, beautiful and bright even in the grimy streets of the great town.

One day early in June the mute came to see the child. The sun shone brightly, and its warm beams fell full upon the smooth sward, and upon the spreading branches of the old trees in Gray's Inn gardens. Scarce a breeze stirred them, scarce a leaf moved in the restful calm; only across the deep blue sky a few tiny clouds floated serenely. The trill of birds, the drone of buzzing insects, the wandering butterflies that fluttered to and fro in the warm air, all spoke of peace and even joy.

The afflicted man paused at his little friend's door, and looked around him with sorrowful regret as if bid-

ding farewell to all he saw. He had brought some trifling toys, and he kissed each gift as he gave it to the child. Then he laid his hand upon her hair, that shone in its golden brightness like an aureole of sunshine around the little head, and taking her in his arms looked earnestly into the tiny face. He murmured a few faint sounds, but none were distinct enough to be intelligible, and placing the child upon the ground he kissed once more those sunny curls. When he rose two tears had fallen upon them, but he made no farther attempt to speak, and with one gesture of farewell he turned away and left her.

The day passed and the fair night came, but in the deep stillness of that night the dreadful cry was heard once more. Again and again it rose, then sank quivering and died away in exhausted agony.

Poor Mr. Kitway well knew the hateful signal that summoned him to his distasteful task. More slowly than strict duty required he was proceeding to his post, but scarcely had he started when he found that from every street and every court excited groups were hurrying toward the fatal house.

On arriving there all was still; no sound indicated that aught was wrong, but popular fury was now fairly aroused. Loudly was admission demanded, and blows fell like hail upon the stout door. At length the pale student forced his way through the angry crowd. "In the name of the Law!" he said, striking the door with his clenched fist. "I demand admittance in the name of the Law! Open, or I bring those who will force an entry, and learn what foul crime is being perpetrated here."

Movements were heard within. A lamp fell; there was the noise of breaking glass. Then the bolts were withdrawn, and the Unknown stood before them. His face was pale as death, his cloak was wrapped around him, and the gleam of an expiring fire glittered on the shining barrel of the pistol he held in his hand.

"Back!" he said. "I suffer no man to force an entrance here. My servant is ill and suffering; I will not permit him to be disturbed. Fools!" he added bitterly, looking with contemptuous anger upon the crowd who had shrunk back at the sight of the loaded

weapon, "you fear what you cannot understand, and deem that science can be explained to such as you!"

The student alone had stood his ground. He remained near the door, resolute and also incredulous.

"You wish to know?" continued the Unknown turning toward the young man. "You wish to judge for yourself? Be it so! Enter, you are welcome," he added with a grim smile.

So saying he unbarred the lower portion of the door, and, permitting the student to enter, closed and locked it again immediately. The darkness, the knowledge of the loaded pistol, combined with the stern voice and harsh looks of its owner, scared the crowd that remained. Gradually it melted away, and ere long the house was again left to its original occupants.

The lamp had been broken, the fire was nearly extinct, and the shadows lay heavily around the large dusky room. By degrees, however, as the student's eyes became accustomed to the gloom he was able to distinguish various objects.

A figure lay extended on an opposite couch. The young man made an eager step toward it, conscious that here was the sufferer he had come to aid, but as he did so the Stranger caught him by the arm.

"Nay," he said, "do not approach too near; my servant is in a critical condition. The slightest agitation might be fatal. In one moment I will procure a light."

As he spoke he replaced and re-lit the lamp. The student started with horror at the scene now displayed before him. On a wooden couch, or rather table, lay the inanimate body of the poor servant, convulsive twitchings of the mouth and eyelids alone showing that life was not extinct. His lower limbs were strapped to the couch on which he was extended, and in his throat was the same large and frightful wound that had been seen before, and again, as before, the same terrible stream was welling from it, making hideous all on which it flowed.

"Man!" cried the student passionately, as this dreadful sight met his eyes, "have you no compassion, no heart, that you are allowing this unhappy wretch to bleed to death?"

Hastily he endeavored to staunch the deadly stream, but scarcely had he touched the wound than he leaped excitedly to his feet, and throwing himself with his utmost strength upon the Unknown essayed to hurl him to the ground.

"Murderer! Vile wretch!" he shouted. "This is no accident! This is brutal, savage, dastardly murder!"

The man attacked staggered under so unexpected and violent a shock, but in another moment he was as calm, as collected as ever.

"Pshaw!" he said, freeing himself with a strong and rapid wrench from his assailant's grasp. "You are but a fool like the rest. I had imagined *you* had some sense, some power of reasoning. I supposed *you* might possibly understand. However, as you are here, be quiet and helpful. Take these bandages, and aid me in relieving my poor fellow."

Again with skilful hand he dressed the wound, again administered the powerful and reviving draught. Again did the sufferer look with humble, loving eyes into the face of his master, and kiss with grateful tenderness the hand which, if it now tended, must have done the cruel deed.

The student was confounded. The cold glittering eyes of the Unknown were as passionless, the harsh face as impassive as before; but there could be no doubt of the strong affection that existed between master and man. But then,—how account for this terrible, this savage wound?

A surgeon's knife lay near; at hand were other instruments, besides surgical appliances and medicaments of various kinds. Near the couch also was a mysterious, indeed alarming machine, very little known a hundred years ago, but now common enough and well understood as a powerful means of affecting the human system, namely a galvanic battery, while the open door of a neighboring cupboard disclosed complicated coils and lines of wire. These wires passing round the body of the sufferer connected him with the battery. All these mysterious implements to the unlearned eyes of the student savored much of the supernatural and of the forbidden; but he dared make no inquiries, and soon the patient, relieved from pain, and lulled by a

powerful potion, sank into a troubled sleep. His master sat close beside him, watching each symptom with anxious care. After a time the convulsive starts, the feeble moans ceased, and the sufferer was sleeping calmly.

Then the Unknown arose, and leaving the side of the couch threw himself as if totally exhausted into a chair, and for a short time remained motionless and silent. After a while, however, he aroused himself, and signing to the student to draw near, looked up. But his now haggard and aged face was that of a man who has passed through a deadly ordeal. The last few hours had done the work of years.

"The poor fellow you see lying there," he said in a deep and hollow voice, "had courage more than most men, and not only courage but love and faith. A danger to which he exposed himself for my sake, and for my sake alone, resulted in a shock so sudden, so terrible, that it deprived him of speech. Circumstances unnecessary to relate," continued the speaker, his dark face darkening still more as he spoke, while an angry frown contracted his brows, "circumstances connected with my early life, or rather death," he pursued grimly, "induced me then to devote myself to the most occult branches of the surgeon's art.

"In the great schools of Padua, Paris, and Vienna, there are certain students who not only apply themselves to the study of surgery and anatomy in the fashion, and according to the system, adopted by the most celebrated professors in those cities, but who also advocate the theories advanced by the ancient sages of Egypt, Chaldea, and Arabia. These learned men believed that the great principles of life have intimate and strange analogy with the mighty elements of the Universe. They were convinced that through the tremendous agency of an almost unknown, but essentially vital, principle called electricity, combinations might be obtained, not only marvellous but stupendous in their effects upon nature, animate as well as inanimate. The lightning that rends the heavens with its death-dealing bolt is as replete with life as it is with death. Doubtless this mighty agent has power to influence metals buried deep in the bosom of the earth, as well as those

upon its surface; but such conjunctions when brought to bear upon the human frame produce results so terrific for evil no less than for good, that few dare venture upon experiments involving such deadly risk. Not only has the strength of this formidable element never been fully understood, but the profound researches of those learned in the art have never been appreciated. They have sought to relieve mankind from some of their many burdens of suffering, and they have been stigmatized as magicians or soothsayers, meriting only the punishments due to those accursed of heaven and of men. Nevertheless it has been to these secret and experimental studies of the surgeon's art that I have devoted myself, although, as I have said, to the vulgar and easily frightened masses the danger that attends such practices and experiments make their professors objects of fear, and often indeed of hatred. It is now more than two hundred years since I mooted this subject in Paris. That clever *intrigante* Maintenon had talent enough to see what power such knowledge would give its professor, but then the king died and——"

"What," cried the student starting up, "do you mean to assert that two hundred years ago you . . ." but even as he spoke he met the cold, steady glance of the Unknown. An icy shiver ran through his veins, he sank back in his chair, cowed and silent. Without noticing the interruption the Stranger continued, but in a dreamy voice as if speaking to himself.

"Because I possess electrical machines, and the batteries or means by which they operate; because I have endeavored, and have in some measure succeeded in improving the condition of my poor servant, who loves me and who trusts me, I have been hunted from town to town. No man believes in me; in vain I endeavor to aid the suffering; none will have fellowship with me."

He paused in painful thought, but after a time resumed his discourse.

"By directing the force of electricity upon the spine, by relieving pressure on the brain and on the muscles, whose undue tension impeded utterance, I had already made giant steps toward the faithful fellow's cure.

Ere long I am convinced it would have been perfected, but now—now—"

The speaker paused, and his dark face grew yet more sombre as he looked with gloomy, regretful eyes on the pale features of the slumbering patient.

The student made no reply. He remained quiet, watchful, even fearful. Much as he disliked his position, he was unwilling to leave his post until he had seen the end of this strange nocturnal drama. From time to time he cast a furtive glance at the Unknown. At one moment he would fancy the fire of insanity burnt in those deep-set glowing eyes; but hardly had the thought come to him ere it was rejected, for the noble brow, the intellectual head, the skilful hands that tended the patient with such practised care, made him confident he was in the presence of one of those advanced and original thinkers whose knowledge infinitely surpassed that of the ordinary medical practitioners of the day. He was well aware also that such superior knowledge and skill were not unfrequently repaid by base ingratitude and cruel obloquy.

The hours wore slowly on. At intervals the surgeon renewed the dressings and gave medicines to the sufferer. Even to the unpractised eye of the student it was evident that the remedies employed were marvellously efficacious. The fever gradually subsided. The wound had a perfectly healthy appearance, presenting every prospect of being speedily and thoroughly healed. The patient's sleep had become quiet and restful.

When this result had been attained the Unknown again arose, retrimmed the lamp, and took from a closet various dishes of cold meat, with bread and fruit. He also placed upon the table several long-necked and curiously marked bottles of wine.

"I pray you to honor me by partaking of some food," said this strange being courteously, as he placed the wine and viands before his guest. "You must be fatigued by your long vigil, and it is a rare pleasure to me to eat in the company of others."

The student did not require much pressing. He was both hungry and tired, and did ample justice to the supper that was set before him. Not only were the dishes excellently good, but the wines were of a rare

and costly description. Never before had the poor fellow enjoyed so luxurious a repast.

The host meanwhile partook but sparingly of the food he had provided; some bread, a little fruit, and a small quantity of wine was all he allowed himself. Repeatedly, however, did he fill his guest's glasses to the brim, and, his mind being apparently more at ease than it had hitherto been, he discoursed upon a multitude of subjects, displaying such variety and depth of knowledge, such profundity of learning that the student was both dazzled and entranced. How was it, the latter said to himself, that he had for so long a period been near one so exceptionally gifted, so widely learned, and had failed to profit by such a neighbor? For the future he would endeavor to cultivate such friendly intercourse.

"You like that Tokay?" said his host, seeing that the guest was enjoying with peculiar zest a glass of that costly wine. "It is, I grant, good; but as you are evidently a connoisseur in such matters I have something here which I think you will pronounce infinitely superior even to Imperial Tokay;" so saying he produced a short, thick flask containing a rich liqueur whose golden amber had a greenish tinge; even in opening the flask its contents sent forth a delicate aroma most inviting to the senses.

"This," he said, pouring out a large glassful for his wondering visitor, "is perhaps the most precious cordial that is made in Europe. In the lonely convent of the Chartreuse, the austere brotherhood of St. Bruno cultivate grapes and herbs from which they extract this generous liquor. The finest sort is sold for its weight in gold, which gold is applied by the brotherhood to deeds of charity, and for the benefit of poorer communities. Not only do the brethren themselves never taste the delicious nectar they manufacture, but the only food they eat is a mass of boiled vegetables, their only drink the water of the mountain stream. From the moment that they pass within the walls of this stern monastery speech, save on occasions of urgent necessity, is forbidden. But peace is there," continued the Unknown dreamily, "a peace that knows no change, for the shadow of death beneath which they dwell never

deepens, is never darkened by men's evil passions, and the grave in which they daily dig but opens to them the portals of eternal life."

He paused, for by this time the generous wines, the powerful liqueurs, had begun to affect the senses of the poor student. Compelled by hard necessity to deny himself every luxury, long habituated to the simplest fare, he had never before tasted wine of a flavor so delicate or of a power so subtle. Vain were the faint and impotent struggles he made to keep awake. A few more seconds and his limbs relaxed, his head fell back; he slept.

For a moment the Unknown contemplated him with a grim and sarcastic smile. Then advancing close to the sleeper, and gazing at him fixedly with stern intentness, this strange being made several singular and rapid passes with his hands across the head and face of the unconscious man.

"Sleep, fool," he muttered, "sleep, and dream you have penetrated my secrets!"

He turned away, and again seizing the formidable surgeon's knife, stepped gently toward the couch beside the wall.

* * * * * *

It was Saturday morning, and on that day Mrs. Mimms was accustomed to visit her clients in Raymond's Buildings. Having attended to her important employers, she then repaired to the humble rooms inhabited by the poor student.

She knocked and knocked, but there was no response. In general the young man rose with the sun. Never before had she found him sleeping at so late an hour. After knocking a few dozen times upon the door, with steady, unremitting regularity, Mrs. Mimms bethought herself of turning its handle. She did so, but on entering started back in amazement.

"Lor-a-mercy, sir," she ejaculated, "what a turn you've been and give me! You do look ghastly, sir, to be sure!"

The student started from the sofa on which he had been lying, and stared at her like one distraught. His face was indeed ghastly white, his eyes were sunken

and bloodshot, his clothes were stained with wine. He looked like one aroused from some terrible dissipation.

"Where am I?" he said drowsily, slowly passing his hand over his burning forehead. "I thought I was below with——"

Vainly he endeavored to recall his scattered senses. The scene he had witnessed the preceding night was too deeply stamped upon his memory to be easily forgotten. He remembered every circumstance. But how had he returned to his room, and who had brought him? After swallowing that last fatal glass of wine all things had become blank to him. Bitterly angry with himself for his folly, he dismissed Mrs. Mimms, and hastily dressing proceeded to the basement chambers, determined to obtain from their tenant a full explanation of all that had occurred.

The door was closed, all was quiet within. He knocked again and again, but no answer came to his summons. At length he forced open the door. All was dark, silent, solitary. But he could see that the room was as he had left it on the preceding night. On the table were the bottles of the wine that had lured him into the excess he so deeply regretted. There was the couch on which the injured man had been extended, the chair of the master beside it. But where was that master? Where was his servant? The electrical machines had also disappeared; but on the ground lay a wreck of metal plates and broken wires.

The bewildered student hastened to the upper floor. The door yielded instantly to his touch, but the rooms were vacant. Neither here nor below was there anything to divulge the means by which a man grievously wounded could have been removed with such secrecy and so silently. Long did the young man ponder over the inexplicable proceedings of that night, and vainly did he endeavor to elucidate the mystery. Some years later, however, alterations had to be made in the house occuped by the strange tenant, and it was then discovered that a passage had been excavated that from the basement gave access not only to the gardens, but also to a narrow street beyond the precincts of Gray's Inn. Certain mystic signs also found in the plaster of this underground way gave information to the initiated

that the Stranger was a member of one of those secret societies whose proceedings caused much disquiet to many continental governments. In these circumstances the student thought it prudent to desist from farther inquiries.

The young man ultimately attained a high position on the Judicial Bench, but even then he never wavered in his opinion that the man he had encountered thus mysteriously was not only gifted with rare intellectual powers, but that he was one of those singular beings who are endowed with an extraordinary spiritual influence—a potent and subtle influence such as that first brought before the world and practised by the celebrated Mesmer. For the general public, however, the mystery of the Unknown Tenant and his unhappy servant remained unsolved, for never again were they seen in that ill-omened house. Never again were they seen in Raymond's Buildings; but from time to time it was whispered with bated breath, that dimly visible beneath the spreading branches of Lord Bacon's tree in the old gardens, appeared the figure of a man closely wrapped in the folds of a heavy cloak. The face was hidden, but the extended hand pointed with menacing gesture to a dark and crimson stain that formed an ugly blot amid the leafy shadows. Woe to him to whom this vision came, for trouble was near at hand!

After a prudent interval of silence Mr. Kitway ventured to relate his own experiences. At first his tale was well received, but familiarity bred the inevitable result, and Mr. Kitway's friends became incredulous. However, the good little man increased and prospered; that is to say, his family increased and his business prospered; nor did the gold pieces he had received from the Mysterious Unknown turn into dry leaves or bits of charcoal, as they must inevitably have done had they come direct from the Evil One himself.

ROMANCE

BEING

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THE NEW YORK STORY CLUB,
30 East 23d Street,
New York.

Truly this young man received a warm welcome. It is hard even to imagine that such things ever happened in the United States, but we have the word of Maurice Thompson for it, who wrote this story for the San Francisco *Sunday Call*.

THE MYSTIC KREWE.

CHAPTER I.

About seventy years ago a young man of strong physique and prepossessing appearance arrived at New Orleans. He had come from New York, of which city he was a native, and had brought with him a considerable sum of money, supplemented by a letter of introduction to Judge Favart de Caumartin, who was then at the flood-tide of his fame.

It would not be fair to call our young man ("our hero" would be the good old phrase) an adventurer without taking pains to qualify the impression that might be produced. Hepworth Coleman had his own way of looking at life. Fifty years later he would have been a tragedian, probably a famous one; but the conditions were not favorable to awaken histrionic ambition at the time when his character, his tastes, his ambition, should have been forming. What he saw that was most fascinating to him had no distinct form; it lay along the south-western horizon a dreamy, mist-covered something not unlike the confines of romance.

He was rich, and what was, perhaps, a greater misfortune, he had no living kinsfolk for whom he cared or who cared for him. Practically speaking, he was alone in the world; moreover, he had an imagination. Scott's novels, Byron's poetry, the French romances, and I know not what else of the sort, had been his chief reading. For physical recreation he had turned to fencing and pistol-practice. When I add that he was but twenty-two and unmarried, the rest may be guessed. But Coleman was not a young man of the world in the worst sense; he had not turned to evil sources of dissipation. Healthy, vigorous, full of spirit, he nevertheless had sentimental longings, as indefinite as they were persistent.

Youth is the spring-time when "Longen folk to gon on pilgrimages," as old Chaucer words it, and it would be hard to find the young man who has not felt the vaguely-outlined yet irresistible desire to wander—to go over the horizon into a strange, new world. Hepworth Coleman, when he was taken with this longing, felt no restraint cast around him. He was absolutely free; had all the means necessary. Why should he not go where he pleased? If it seems strange that he should have been attracted to New Orleans rather than to the Old World, we must remember what New Orleans was in 1820. No other city, not even Paris, could at that time compare with it as a centre of genuine romance. Nor was this romance unmixed with lawlessness of the most picturesque kind. Money poured into it from a hundred sources more or less illegitimate, besides the streams of wealth produced by cotton, sugar, and rice industries. Gambling was indeed a fine art, duelling appeared more a pastime than anything else, and what went on in the gilded halls and melody-filled salles may be imagined, I suppose, though I do not care to cast a glance that way.

Hepworth Coleman had heard much of the gay city, of its warm, odorous atmosphere, its hospitality, its social charm, the smack of reckless romance in all its ways. Somehow the desire to go there got hold of his imagination and he went.

The letter to Judge Favart de Caumartin was given to Coleman by his banker, who in handing it to him said:

"I don't know the judge personally, never saw him; but he has done a lot of business through us. He is very rich, evidently very influential, and certainly will be of use to you. I feel that I can take the liberty of sending you to him, because—well, he is under many obligations to the bank and is likely to want many more large favors. I fancy that you'll find him a trifle eccentric, but enthusiastically hospitable. A creole of the creoles, I judge him to be, and a representative of the nabobs."

Young Coleman considered himself lucky to carry with him a document that would give him introduction to a person so renowned as Judge Favart de Caumar-

tin, of whom he had been recently reading a good deal, owing to a duel fought between the judge and one Colonel Sam Smith, of the United States Army, in which the latter had been killed. The duel had brought out history, from which it appeared that Judge Favart de Caumartin had fought before, not once only, but many times, and always to the death of his antagonist. Along with these facts were disclosed numerous picturesque details of the judge's past life, with more than hints that in his young days he had been a pirate or something of the sort. The account also made the most of his wealth, his almost reckless liberality, his eccentricity, and, most of all, the air of mystery which still hung over his business operations.

All this was rich food for an imagination already thoroughly saturated with the spirit of romantic adventure, and during the voyage from New York to New Orleans Hepworth Coleman found deep satisfaction in anticipating what he felt was in store for him. In every fibre of his frame he felt the assurance that he was on the way to new and strange experiences.

His banker had sent a letter to precede his arrival by a few days, asking a friend to secure suitable apartments for "Mr. Hepworth Coleman, gentleman," the consequence being that a dark young man, small, but well built and handsome, met him at the landing to conduct him to his suite of elegant rooms on Royal Street.

"Is you Meestu Coleman, sah?" inquired this young stranger in a musical tone of voice. "I look fo' zat ma' at Prayson."

"Yes, sir, that is my name," said Coleman briskly, at the same time showing by his look that he would like to know whom he was meeting.

"Varee glad you come, Meestu Coleman; varee glad, sah, indeed. Got your rooms all prepare fo' you, sah. Yas, sah, zey is beautifu' an' sharming rooms."

"Thank you; I am much indebted. Are you the gentleman to whom Mr. Cartwright, the banker, wrote in my behalf?"

"Nah, sah; not any banker write to me. I been tole to meet you at zis place at Prayson. Happy to see you, Meestu Coleman; varee happy."

There was an elegant carriage at hand waiting for our friend. A negro driver in livery and a small black footman stood by.

Coleman entered the vehicle, followed closely by the young creole who had met him on the landing. He saw his baggage hoisted into a little wagon to come after the carriage.

For some reason not exactly explainable, this whole proceeding affected Coleman peculiarly. He felt a sort of vague uneasiness, as if he were passing into an atmosphere of mystery, if not of danger.

As he was whirled through the narrow streets he caught glimpses of queer tile-covered houses, with curious hanging galleries; high walls and gloomy courts flanked these, and here and there a dusky palm or a bright orange tree flung up its foliage. Blooming magnolia clumps filled the air with a heavy, languid odor.

But what most attracted the attention of Coleman was a company of four or five young men, dressed like dandies, swaggering along on one of the sidewalks, and singing a drinking-song at the top of their voices. One of these hilarious fellows made a lasting impression on our young friend's imagination. He was a tall, olive-skinned, handsome man, apparently about twenty-five, strikingly dressed in a plaid coat, a vest of red and black velvet, gray trousers, and a profusely-ruffled shirt. Evidently he was the leading spirit of the party. At all events, he was somewhat in front with his black cap set well back on his shapely head, while his jet-black hair fell in shining curls over his strong shoulders. He was shouting forth the French drinking-carol in a voice as sweet as it was loud, and at the same time waving in the air a small cane. The entire group looked the worse for wine, their faces flushed and their eyes brilliant.

"Who is that strange-looking man in front?" inquired Coleman of his creole companion, as they pased them by.

"Zat ge'man ees ze Joozh Favart de Caumartin," was the answer that fairly startled the interrogator.

Coleman actually grew red in the face and exclaimed:

"That Judge Favart de Caumartin! Surely, sir, you are mistaken."

"Beg pahdon, sah, zat ees Monsieur le Juge Favart de Caumartin. I him know varee well myself at Prayson."

Coleman turned and stared back through the window at the strutting youthful figure leading the noisy rout.

How could that be the celebrated duellist, the guardian pirate!

"It cannot be he," he muttered aloud. "It is impossible."

"Varee well, Meestu Coleman," said the young creole dryly; "but I mus' inqui' yo' pahdon, sah. Monsieur le Juge Favart de Caumartin ees to me well acquainted. I wemark to you, sah, zat zare ees not any mistake."

"Oh, certainly, sir, I beg a thousand pardons!" exclaimed Coleman, pulling himself together and seeing his breach of etiquette. "Of course you are right, but I was so surprised to see the judge looking so young. I had supposed that he was an aged man. I am astonished."

"Oh, monsieur, le juge ees not so varee young—not so varee—hees hair not much gray."

While they were still discussing this matter the carriage stopped in front of a square, heavy-looking house which, painted a dull red and projecting its upper gallery over the sidewalk, flung out on either side a heavy brick wall on whose top was a jagged dressing of broken bottles and jugs. It looked more like a convent than like an apartment-house.

Hepworth Coleman found his suite of rooms admirable in every respect; large, airy, luxuriously furnished. His creole conductor parted with him at the door without giving his name or address, and without any explanation whatever of his connection with the matter of securing these elegant apartments or with making his arrival easy and pleasant.

Some silent and obsequious negro servants were at hand to do his bidding; but he soon dismissed them while he flung himself upon a sofa and lit his pipe. Altogether incomprehensible to him were the suggestions of secrecy and mystery connected with his recep-

tion; scarcely less so was the youthful—nay, boyish—appearance of Judge Favart de Caumartin.

As if the mysterious atmosphere meant to continue growing denser, it was while he lay on the luxurious scarlet sofa, smoking, resting, and meditating, that a beautiful girl came and stood for a moment in the doorway of his chamber. She blushed sweetly at the sight of him, recoiled violently, and then slipped swiftly away, leaving behind her a rustle of fine stuff, a sparkle of rare jewels, and a lingering bouquet of violets and roses.

Coleman felt the delicious shock of her magnetic beauty thrill through him. A sort of shimmering outline of her form wavered or appeared to waver in the door after she had gone, so dazzling had been the effect of her fresh, pure, flower-like, yet intensely human, beauty. He heard her feet tap swiftly and lightly along the hall. Involuntarily and with unpardonable curiosity he sprang up, and hurrying to the door looked out; but she was not in sight. For the first time in his life he felt his heart beating unnaturally.

CHAPTER II.

Evening was drawing on, sending a soft twilight into the room, when Coleman's dinner was brought in by a shy and silent old colored woman. He had not ordered the meal, nor had he felt the need of it. ubtless the stimulus afforded by the unusual character of his surroundings held his sense of hunger in abeyance.

The old woman retired as soon as she had arranged the repast on a round mahogany table. Coleman found the oysters, the wine, the broiled fish, and the French bread excellent to such a degree that he ate almost everything before him; then leaning far back in his chair he began to study the silver set from which all these good things had been taken. The platter was in the form of a flounder, the sugar-bowl was a frog, the cream pitcher a heron, the coffee-pot a pelican. These curious pieces were exquisitely carved, and on each was cut the name Favart de Caumartin in plain, bold letters. Even on the five-armed silver candle-stick, in which burned five fragrant myrtle wax tapers, appeared that striking inscription. He surveyed the room now

with a more critical eye, discovering at once that the pictures, the curtains, the carpets, and indeed all the articles of furniture, were costly and beautiful beyond anything he had ever seen before. Evidently he was in Judge de Caumartin's house.

The moon was shining brilliantly when Coleman went forth for a short walk in the street. Not many people were abroad, it being the dinner hour; but certain cafés were crowded with men and women who were drinking champagne and discussing the dishes on well-spread tables.

At the door of one of these gorgeous rooms Coleman met the young man whom a few hours before he had seen leading the rout of singers in the street. It occurred to him that now was as good as any time to present his letter to the judge, so he forthwith stepped near him and said, lifting his hat:

"I believe I have the honor of meeting Judge Favart de Caumartin."

The gentleman stared at him a moment very deliberately, then with just a suspicion of a smile and with a courteous dignity wholly inimitable and indescribable doffed his queer little black cap as he spoke:

"And who does me the honor of addressing me?"

"I am Hepworth Coleman, of New York."

"Ah!"

"I hold a letter to you from Mr. Phineas Cartwright, of the firm of Cartwright & Vanderveer, bankers."

"Indeed! I feel honored."

Coleman produced the letter and tendered it, but not without a vague feeling of insecurity of some sort. He had not expected this peculiar reserve and caution on the part of the judge. Could it be that he was to be treated as an infliction to be borne for mere policy's sake? His distrust and doubt, however, were of short duration, for the judge had no sooner read the epistle, which was much longer than any mere letter of introduction, than his whole manner changed. He held out his hand.

"I am charmed, delighted, sir," he said, with a slight creole accent that made his voice very pleasing, "I am proud to see you. I hope you find your rooms agreeable."

Coleman clasped his hand and felt that measure of relief which comes when one is suddenly lifted out of a very awkward situation.

The judge read the banker's letter over again with great deliberation, and apparently with much concentration of mind, while Coleman, who could not remove his eyes from his fascinating dark face, stood waiting for the opportunity to say:

"You do me infinite honor, judge, in quartering me in your own house. I had not expected, and could not expect, such hospitality."

The judge hesitated; then with a calm smile remarked that whatever he could do for so distinguished a visitor would be but a small expression of the greater hospitality that he would like to bestow were he able.

"And now," he presently continued, "come with me to my own private apartments, where we can have some quiet conversation and a smoke."

Coleman could not fail to see that the judge was still somewhat touched with wine, though the mood of wild hilarity had passed off.

They passed along the street until they reached a narrow blind alley, into which the moonlight fell but dimly between dusky walls.

To Coleman's surprise, the judge led the way into this, then up a flight of winding and rather rickety stairs to a dark hall, along which they passed for what seemed a great distance. At the end the judge fumbled for some time, and by some means opened a low, heavy door giving into a room that reeked with the odor of tobacco and the fumes of wine. Passing across this by the light of a dim dormer window they reached a close passageway which led them to another prison-like door, which the judge managed to open after a great deal of trouble. The room that they now entered was exceedingly small, a mere cell in extent, as Coleman felt rather than saw; the walls, damp and grimy, being almost within reach on either hand.

"Stand here for one moment, please," said the judge, touching Coleman's arm, "until I call a servant."

Then he stepped briskly back through the doorway and drew the solid shutter to with a hollow clang. Some strange echoes went wandering away as if from

distance to distance, above, below, around, followed by absolute silence. A faint flicker of light came from above; but it seemed a reflection rather than a direct beam from the moon, and the air was close, heavy, atrociously bad.

Coleman stood amazed for a few moments before going to the door, which he found immovable. He groped around the wall only to discover that there was no other outlet.

CHAPTER III.

Judge Favart de Caumartin's residence was a large, rambling structure, more like a hotel than like a private house. Considering that his wife was dead and that he had but one living child, a daughter of seventeen, it was strange that he kept up such an extensive establishment, in which perhaps twenty rooms stood richly furnished but unoccupied. It was his pleasure, however, and his pleasure was law.

Mlle. Olympe de Caumartin was greatly surprised when by merest chance she discovered Hepworth Coleman making himself quite at home in a remote room of the house. We have seen how she showed her confusion as she stepped into the doorway and found herself face to face with the young man. The glance that passed between them wrought a wonder in the heart of each. I shall not say that they fell in love at first sight. Love cannot be so accurately traced that its origin can be exactly found out in any particular case. It is enough to record that Mlle. Olympe de Caumartin caught something new, something sweet from that momentary gaze and shut it up in her heart involuntarily, with a thrill that never again quite left her breast. She went back through halls and rooms to her own boudoir, her cheeks and lips rosy with excitement and a gentle tremor in her limbs.

That evening in the library the judge told his daughter that he had given a suite of rooms in the farthest wing of the mansion to a wealthy young gentleman from New York.

"I have had letters from my Mr. Cartwright, my banker there, asking me to take care of him, and this seemed the best I could do under the circumstances.

I did not see my way to bringing him any nearer to us. We don't care to have another member added to the family, eh, Olympe, dear?"

Mlle. de Caumartin blushed; she may have felt a touch of guilt because she could not muster courage to tell her father that she had already visited Mr. Coleman.

"I have not seen him yet," continued the judge; "I thought it best to let him have some rest before calling upon him. Cartwright advises me that he is of an excellent family—a man to be given the greatest attention, and for my banker's sake, if for nothing else, I must meet the demand upon my hospitality. He came a fortnight earlier than I expected, but I had Jules watching for him, and you know Jules never fails."

"But you should have told me before, father dear," said Mlle. Olympe, "only a while ago, while wandering through the distant wing of the house, I invaded this young gentleman's apartment. It surprised him evidently as much as it abashed me."

"The obvious moral of which is," replied the judge quickly, "that you are hereafter to be more careful about what rooms you are tumbling into." As he spoke his dark, oval face, with its fine grave smile, was almost like a boy's. The flush that lay under the skin shone through with a suggestion of some repressed stimulus, as if a great passion had forced it up. In his eyes an underglow, so to call it, smouldered with fascinating vagueness.

Mlle. Olympe sat for a moment on his knee and stroked his long black hair.

"You will stay with me to-night, father, dear," she presently murmured coaxingly; "you will not go out to-night."

"I must be gone a little while," he said, rising at once, "but just a little while."

She clung close to him.

"Not this night, please," she urged, with a touching tremor in her voice. "Oh, you remember, this night a year ago you had that dreadful adventure in the dark room. You must not go out; please, for my sake, do not."

An expert observer would have seen while this was

going on a strange, half-worried, almost fiercely-concentrated expression in the judge's eyes. It was as if he mightily wished to remain with his child, but could not by any effort resist some powerful temptation tugging at him and drawing him away.

He kissed her tenderly, pushed her gently from him, and went out.

The girl cast herself upon a sofa and buried her face in her hands as a vision of that night one year before came up before her eyes.

Some strange masked men had brought her father home far in the night, white as a ghost, helpless, speechless, apparently dead. They put him down there in the room and vanished.

He had no wound, no bruise, no mark of any violence; but he recovered very slowly, and he never told what had befallen him.

Mlle. Olympe knew of her father's frequent duels, and if he had been brought in dead or badly off on account of a pistol-ball or rapier-thrust, she would not have been surprised beyond measure; but this mysterious performance of the masked men and the unaccountable condition of the judge were taken hold upon by her imagination and raised to the highest power of romantic meaning.

A year had passed, and she might not have recalled the exact anniversary but for the prattle of an old servant, to the effect that she had seen her master, the judge, marching at the head of a company of masked men, himself wearing an "invisible" mask and a queer black velvet cap.

Mlle. Olympe observed that her father was flushed, as if with wine, and his bearing was indicative of some subtle and indescribable excitement within him. When he went away she felt that something startling was going to happen soon.

CHAPTER IV.

When Hepworth Coleman suddenly found himself a prisoner in that close, dark room he did not at first suspect any treachery on the part of Judge Favart de Caumartin. He expected that gentleman to return in

the course of a few minutes; but this favorable impression was soon removed by certain startling events that crowded one upon another.

First a low, rumbling, clanging sound, like the beating of metallic gongs in the distance, came through the walls and filled the cell; then, as this died away to utter silence, he heard tumultuous whisperings all round, above, below. The thousand voices all seemed to be saying the same thing, which presently he made out to be the words: "The Krewe is coming; make ready for the Krewe!" When the whispering ended little purple lights began to flash here and there, but so mysteriously did they twinkle that he could not locate them, and these were followed by phantom faces, wan, waxen, faintly luminous, appearing and fading instantly, succeeded by intense darkness.

Now, Hepworth Coleman was a man of iron nerve, an athlete in body and spirit, who, although full of romantic and poetic impulses, was at the base of his character as brave and steadfast as a lion; still even the best courage has its moment of faltering, and just at the point when one whole wall of his cell was withdrawn, so that he stood in the full glare of twenty brilliant chandeliers that lighted a large, gorgeously-decorated hall, he felt the blood grow stiflingly heavy on his heart. Before him stood a file of fantastic figures, men oddly clad and strangely armed, who clashed their brazen shields together and pointed their swords at his breast. On the walls of the spacious room hung weird-looking trophies, skulls, pictures of dead men ghastly and livid, pistols, swords, and strange banners. The floor was carpeted with heavy Persian tapestry, thickly padded underneath.

Coleman stood gazing while the file of armed men —perhaps platoon would be more correct—went through some silent but intricate evolutions after beating their shields together and threatening him with their swords. When the movements were ended one of the maskers came up to him and struck him lightly with the flat of his weapon across the cheek, saying in a loud whisper:

"Beware! you are in imminent danger."

Coleman took him at his word and instantly let go a blow from the shoulder. His close-set fist met the

masker's jaw with a sound of crushing pasteboard, and down went the man outstretched at full length on the floor, his shield and sword giving forth a muffled clang as they crossed upon the soft carpet.

Quick as a cat Coleman leaped forward and picked up the sword, a beautiful rapier, and, assuming a defensive attitude, cried out boldly:

"Come one at a time and I will fight you all!"

The fantastic figures looked at one another with evident questioning, though not a word was said.

Meantime the fallen one scrambled to his feet and swore two or three bitter French oaths. The leader rebuked him with gestures.

"Come one at a time, you cowardly villains," repeated Coleman, "and I'll soon finish you all. Come on, the first one, if you dare meet a man!"

He was terribly angry, but his voice was steady and even.

There was a space of silence, then the leader said something to one of the men, who immediately cast aside his shield and advanced with his rapier.

It was a short conflict. Coleman disarmed his antagonist with ease in less than a minute.

Another man came on and shared the same fate, with the addition of a prick through the wrist of the sword-arm.

This was exhilarating to Coleman in his exasperation at being made the butt of some mysterious trick.

"Come next," he cried, "I want the best of you—and the best is a coward. Come on!"

Evidently the mystic band now felt the gravity that the occasion was assuming. The maskers looked to their leader.

"Don't stand there afraid," sneered Coleman; "come on and get your turn. Who's next?"

One after another responded, only to fare badly As yet, however, all had escaped without deadly hurt, when the leader himself made ready to fight. Those who had come to grief were quietly cared for by others, and all seemed to treat the proceedings as by no means startling or even unusual.

When the leader threw aside his shield and took off his tall plume-covered hat, Coleman was able to rec-

ognize Judge Favart de Caumartin more by his form and bearing than by any disclosure of his features.

As the judge handled his rapier all the company of maskers, even the sorely-wounded ones, came forward to look on with eager expectation. His was steel that never yet had failed to find the vitals of his opponent; but on the other hand there stood Coleman, steadfast and alert, the very picture of strength and will, the embodiment of quickness and certainty, his sword bearing at its point a tiny red clot of blood.

They looked with straining eyes and did not feel sure of the result even with their captain as their champion.

"Come on, sir, and take your punishment, you cowardly leader of cowards!" exclaimed Coleman in a most exasperating tone. "Don't stand there dreading it; pluck up a little nerve and come on!"

It is useless to say that Judge Favart de Caumartin needed no bullying of this sort to urge him into combat. With beautiful swiftness and grace he sprang forward and at once took the offensive.

Then followed sword-play that was amazing to look at. Each combatant showed that mastery of the fencing art which makes the weapon appear to be part of the man. So swiftly leaped the shining shafts of steel that the eye saw only fine symmetrical figures shimmering between the fighters, while spangles of fire leaped from the crossing edges. Coleman felt at once that he had met his match; the judge tingled with the discovery that here at last was a master.

From the first it was a fight to the death if possible. Neither could hope to disarm the other, nor was there probability of any mere disablement ending the contest. The watchers looking on in breathless suspense heard with intensely straining ears the almost magically rapid clinking of the blades.

Coleman fought as if with the energy of all the accumulated romance of his recent experiences, half-recognizing, as he parried and thrust and feinted and recovered guard, the vivid picturesqueness, the melodramatic unreality, and yet the deadly intensity of the situation. He did not know where he was or why he had been brought there; the whole affair had mystery

enough in it to have destroyed the will-power of any weaker man; but to him, while the strangeness affected his imagination, there was nothing in the matter to make him falter or to weaken the force of his arm. A fine glow of enthusiasm flashed indeed into his blood, and with it an access of cunning, grace, and swift certainty of hand and of eye. The feeling prevailed that he had, in some strange way, stepped out of the real world into the world of romance, and as he fought, the charm of heroism fell upon him, and, like the knights of old, he felt the strength of a glorious desperation. All round him the vague spirit of dreamland seemed to hover, though the hideous pictures of skeletons and cadavers gleamed real enough in the glare of the chandeliers. What inspired him most, however, was the knowledge that he was trying his force with that of the greatest duellist in the world and one that had always killed his man.

There was something more that gave spirit and courage to Coleman; he was in some indirect way remembering the beautiful girl who had appeared at the door of his room, and he half-imagined that he was doing battle for the right to know more of her. Youth is a mystery in itself, and love knows no law of origin or of progress. By some cerebral sleight, some trick of thinking under a thought, so to say, Coleman was making a love dream keep time to the ringing strokes of his sword. A girl whose name he did not know, whose voice he had never heard, was inspiring him as he strained every nerve.

As the combat proceeded the lookers-on saw that Coleman's play was new to the judge, who found great difficulty in meeting and parrying certain eccentric movements that invariably ended in a thrust of lightning quickness. Presently the judge tore off his mask with his left hand; he had to do this at the risk of his life, for he could not breathe freely with it on, but his great skill saved him even then; nay, more, it came near giving him the victory. As Coleman lunged the agile creole leaped aside and returned quickly with a wicked thrust that barely reached his adversary's breast, piercing it to the depth of half an inch.

Now the fight took on more of passion and less of

grace, as if the men felt that it was to be a test of strength at last. Round and round, back and forth, this way and that, they leaped and recoiled and advanced, their faces—one dark and beautiful as a Southern night, the other fair and magnetic as a New England June day—fixed and staring, the white froth gathering on their lips.

When the end came it was like nothing ever before witnessed in a New Orleans duel. How it happened not one of the observers could tell, but the two men appeared to rush into each other's arms, and then it was seen that each had run the other through.

That broke the charm. The masked men sprang forward and separated the combatants and all began to talk at once.

CHAPTER V.

Judge Favart de Caumartin and Hepworth Coleman were, by order of the judge himself, taken to the judge's mansion, where their wounds were examined by physicians and surgeons quickly summoned.

Mlle. Olympe de Caumartin found herself nursing two almost dying patients at the same time. Although she suspected that this was the result of a duel between her father and the young stranger, she was not told the secret of the affair until long afterward.

Strange to say, although the judge was much the older man and was wounded much nearer the heart, he recovered and was walking about in his house before Coleman had even taken a turn for the better. The first thing he did was to order his daughter to cease her nursing of the young man.

"It is not proper," he said, "for a young girl to be the nurse of a man who is a stranger."

Mlle. Olympe blushed scarlet and was so much confused that she could not find a word to say. It had been a great pleasure to her to wait upon Coleman, who, though for the greater part of the time quite insensible of her presence, seemed to respond better to her care than to the treatment of the doctors. She had been having her sweet dream, was in love with him, indeed, and the command of her father struck her like a blow

Judge Favart de Caumartin suspected the truth about his daughter, and was not slow in making up his mind in the matter. He gave strict orders that the hall between Coleman's rooms and the rest of the mansion should be kept at all times locked and barred.

Love laughs at such precautions. Hepworth Coleman during his convalescence lay on his back and thought of nobody but Mlle. Olympe, and when at last he was able to get up he sent for her. It so chanced that the judge, having got well in a measure, was gone up to Natchez on business.

Mlle. Olympe did not go to see the young man, but she wrote him a note explaining her father's wishes.

"But he has never forbidden you to come to see me when you are able to walk so far as to the library," she added very frankly, "and I see no reason why you should stay away."

When the judge returned it was too late to interfere, as he soon discovered, and he had to bow to the inevitable.

The mystery of the adventure with the masked men in that secret hall has never been further explained. Judge Favart de Caumartin would not consent to his daughter's marriage until he had exacted a promise from Coleman that he would never divulge what he knew.

The truth was that Coleman knew very little. He tried to discover the blind alley into which the judge had led him on that eventful evening, but there was no such alley to discover. The whereabouts of the mysterious hall cannot be pointed out to-day, although from that memorable Tuesday in the spring of 1820 up to the Madri Gras of 1861, every anniversary of the Mystic Krewe has been duly celebrated by a fantastic band that at a certain hour of the night parades the streets of New Orleans. I do not refer to the regular carnival societies; these are but playful imitations of mystery. The genuine Krewe, as weirdly strange and mysterious as ever, may be seen only on Royal Street, a small band headed by a tall, slender, dark man who wears an invisible mask and a quaint black velvet cap. Where they come from nobody has ever been able to discover; who they are is not known even to the great Rex, the King of the Carnival.

Hepworth Coleman and Mlle. Olympe de Caumartin were married in due time and lived on Royal Street all their lives. Every year on the evening of Mardi Gras they were called upon to give a dinner to the Mystic Krewe, thirteen in number, who ate in silence with their masks on. The last of these dinners was in 1860. That year saw the twain, who for forty years had been happy togther, laid in their tomb side by side.

Strangely enough, there is no record whatever of Judge Favart de Caumartin's death; indeed, there is a tradition to the effect that he it is who still leads the Mystic Krewe.

A hitherto unrecorded incident in Grant's Wilderness campaign. M. Quad tells the story—and it is sad enough—in the New York *Sunday World*.

"WHO COMES HERE?"

"HALT! Who comes here?"

"Friends with the countersign."

"Advance one and give me the countersign!"

It was the relief going the rounds to change the pickets, and I was dropped out at post No. 7. We had fought Lee all day long on the strangest battlefield of the whole war—in the Wilderness. From right to left flank, from front to rear, we were hemmed in by forest and thicket. There were swamps in which lizards and serpents lurked, thickets in which the coy whippoorwill built its nest, dense spots of forest which seemed never to have echoed the ring of the woodman's axe.

We had fought from tree to tree, from thicket to thicket, from glade to glade, pushing back the gray lines here, baffled and compelled to give ground at other points. Lee's lines barred the way. Never a man in his whole army whose musket-barrel was not hot that day. Never a man who did not feel that he was fighting for the life of the Confederacy.

How the forest shook and trembled as the great guns sent their deadly missiles crashing through the foliage! How the thickets blazed up in flames, the severed limbs crashed down, the sunny glades turned dark as night with the powder-smoke settling over them! The dead outnumbered the bushes; the wounded wailed and cried as I never heard them before or after. There was something so sombre—so grewsome—so unearthly in fighting a foe unseen in the semi-darkness that the shouting and cursing usually heard in the lines gave place to silence and pale faces.

Darkness had come at last and the roar of battle had died away to a low growl. Grant had failed to drive Lee. We knew that from flank to flank. If he could not force a passage through those gray lines he could

flank them. Before the sun went down we knew that he would do it. It was not yet night when the movement began, but my division would be one of the last to move, and we must hold our ground and prevent the Confederates from discovering what was taking place. It was a curious coincidence of war that Lee was also moving by the flank, both armies marching in parallel lines from a battle-field which had yielded neither victory nor defeat to either side.

Post No. 7 was under a large tree on the edge of a thicket. To the south there was a strip of open ground, then a thicket, then an old field, in which stood a log cabin. It was a lonely place, well away from the camps, the dead, and the dying, but I was glad to be alone. All along the lines there was a growling of musketry; but this was but a bluff—a bit of acting to cover the real design. I had been nearly an hour on the post without anything happening to alarm me, when I heard a person moving in the thicket across the open strip.

Was it a person? Riderless horses had galloped about that day almost without number; this might be one which had found shelter in that thicket.

Rustle! Rustle! Step! Step!

It was a cautious movement. Whoever it was hoped to reach me without discovery, but there were dead leaves underfoot and the thicket was dense. A hare could not have moved without betraying its presence.

Rustle! Rustle!

Kneeling down so as to see under the darkness, as it were, I suddenly made out a black object against the dark background. It is neither horse nor mule; it is a human being. A scout from the enemy's picket post, only a quarter of a mile away? A wounded man hobbling about to find succor? One of our own scouts returning?

"Who comes here?"

There is silence for fifteen seconds and then a woman's voice answers:

"I can't find the place! It is so dark I can't find the place!"

Ay! it was a woman's voice, and it had a sob in it, too. A woman there in the darkness between the hostile lines—with powder-smoke still in the air, with

stray bullets darting through the thickets with a whizz, as of some great insect stirred to anger!

"Who comes here?"

"I wish it wasn't so dark! I am so tired—so tired!" And then she came across the open strip toward me, making no stop, never hesitating, walking straight up to me, as if she could see as well by night as in the sunshine of day.

"I can't find the place!" she sobbed as she came to a stop within arm's-length.

"Good God, woman! but what are you doing here?" I gasped, almost terrified at her presence.

"See! see!" she replied, holding a bundle out toward me. "One time I saw a beautiful spot in the woods, and said to myself that if he died I would bury him there, but I can't find it—I can't find it!"

"What is it woman? What have you got there?"

"See! see! Don't be afraid. He's dead. He can't speak or move. Take him!"

She put a bundle into my arms and I cried out and let fall my musket. It was the body of a baby about a year and a half old. Dead? Yes! Dead from a cruel bullet which had pierced its little body and left a great wound which looked horrible to me in the dim light! Dead and cold and bathed in its own blood—dead for hours! And when I reached out and touched the shawl or wrap worn by the mother my fingers burned at the feel of blood!

"I have carried him such a long, long way," she moaned, "and I have seen so many dead men and heard so many guns! You'll help me, won't you—help me to find the place and bury poor baby?"

"Was it your baby? Did you live in the cabin beyond the thicket?" I asked, still holding the little corpse.

"He was so happy!" she said as she patted the little bare head with a motherly hand. "And I was so happy, too! He won't never laugh and crow again, will he? I've got to find that beautiful place and bury him, haven't I? And you'll help me; yes, I know you will, for you don't swear and curse at me."

She had lost her mind. Think of it—an insane mother wandering over a bloody battle-field with her

dead child in her arms! She had but one idea—to bury it in a beautiful dell which she had once visited —a dell in which Federal or Confederate were doubtless then burying their own dead.

I knew not what to do. I could not leave my post and I did not want her to go wandering further. I was trying to soothe and quiet the woman when she suddenly cried out:

"Ah! It is not so dark now and I can find the place. I'll go on ahead and dig the grave and do you follow on with baby. Poor baby! He won't know that he is buried, will he? I can find the place and you——"

"Come back! Come back!" I called to her as she fled away in the darkness, but she was two hundred feet away as she answered me:

"I'll find the place! Poor, poor baby!"

And when the relief came I told the story and pointed to the bundle resting on the ground beside me.

"God pity her!" whispered the sergeant as he lifted his cap.

"God pity her!" echoed all the others as they stood uncovered around the poor little corpse.

Time meant human lives that night. Grant was moving by the flank; Lee was moving by the flank to match him. The morrow was to witness more slaughter—make thousands of other widows and orphans.

"Dig here!" said the sergeant and with our bayonets we scooped out a shallow grave in scarcely more than a minute's time.

"Carefully, now! Poor little thing! Now fill in! That will do. God knows where it lies. Fall in—forward, march!"

And yet men write of the glory of war!

A love drama with the Rocky Mountains for a stage, storm clouds for a background, and rushing winds for an orchestra. It was written for ROMANCE by Charles Scates.

A ROMANCE OF THE MOUNTAINS.

THEY had left the rest of the party, with the guides and burros, at the rude little "half-way house" by the tiny lake that lay like an oblong emerald in a setting of bronze, and had wandered away by themselves—he, the brown-bearded young Western metallurgist with a successful career opening before him, and she, the white-faced, delicate-looking sojourner from Boston, with her creole hair and eyes.

The benediction of a perfect Indian summer afternoon lay upon the scene. The cloudless sky so blue that it reminded her of the exquisite coloring of an Easter egg at home; the air so still that even the trembling of the aspen leaves ceased at intervals; the haze about the mountain top like a golden fog—it was an afternoon that made one forget that there were ever extremes of temperature or that the sunbeams must soon sink into the west. Even the gaudy little chipmunks, from safe eminences, placidly regarded the intruders with indolent and contemplative eyes, and the birds seemed mesmerized into a drowsy state.

They had sauntered for some time now and Madge was getting very tired, for the way had been rough. She did not realize the time nor the distance they had wandered—she only knew that to her the whole thing was a poem and a painting so exquisite that if she had heard an organ suddenly burst forth into one of Handel's masterpieces it would have seemed quite in keeping with the place, and she would instinctively have fallen upon her knees.

Bob's thoughts were quite different. He, too, was a lover of nature and capable of deep feeling, but a perfect Colorado afternoon was not new to him, while his love for Madge was; and his pleasure came from seeing her keen but placid enjoyment. It was no accident on his part that they were separated from the rest, and he realized fully that they had been gone over an hour

and were a long distance from the lake. His happiness lay in being alone with her, in watching the waves of surprise and pleasure rippling over her face as new shapes and new landscapes opened upon her view, in answering the child-like questions that bubbled from the dark eyes and pretty lips—and more than all in the thrilling touch of the slender arms and the soft warm hands as he assisted her over the rough places. It was heaven to him and could not last long enough.

But when at last she gave a weary little sigh and sat down upon a convenient log as they reached a bit of a level, saying, "Oh! dear, I'm so tired!" he responded quickly, "I think perhaps we've gone far enough. It's getting along in the afternoon and is time to start back."

"Are we very far from them?" she asked suddenly, seeming to realize for the first time that they might be.

"About a mile, I should say, but I really haven't kept much track of the distance, and this part of the trail is somewhat new to me."

After this there was silence for some time. He saw now that she was quite exhausted, and it occurred to him that the altitude was having some effect upon her. He blamed himself inwardly for his thoughtlessness and was about to ask her if she had trouble in breathing, when a sudden chill in the atmosphere, accompanied by a movement of the air that set the aspens to shivering violently, followed by a gradual dimming of the sunshine, caused them to glance simultaneously toward the sun. What appeared to Madge like a fog was hurrying across it and rapidly growing denser; and as she looked up toward the highest point visible in the west she could see the gray, mist-like substance stealing in between and around the rocks and pines and sweeping silently down toward them. He answered her look of interrogation by saying, somewhat absent-mindedly:

"Clouds! A change of weather! I might have known that the heat this afternoon meant something if I hadn't been thinking of——"

He stopped abruptly and colored; but she had turned and was absorbed in the curious transformation that was going on, and lost his last low-spoken words.

The gray column had completely obscured the sun and was moving rapidly toward them now, leaving behind a great gray wall. They both shivered, and he sprang briskly to his feet.

"As soon as you are rested, Miss Chamberlain, I think we had better start back. It looks as though we might have a squall, and perhaps some snow. This is one of the changes that are common here at this season of the year. We foolishly left our wraps behind. It was my fault, though, for you know nothing of these changes, of course."

She had risen now and started to speak:

"Don't you breathe easily?" he exclaimed with some concern, noticing that she pressed her hand to her chest.

She had paled a little, and now gasped two or three times before she answered, with a smile:

"It seems as though I couldn't get quite enough air in my lungs. I have felt it several times this afternoon. It's trifling," she went on reassuringly; "I will take your arm, though, please, because I am really very tired."

"What a very heavy fog," she continued, shiveringly, after they had walked a short distance; "and how damp it is."

"You could hardly call it fog," he said. "We are in the midst of a cloud, and it is an unusually thick one," he added after a pause, glancing about nervously.

The great gray mass had caught them now and had closed in upon them on every side—beneath them, above them, around them, pressing against their faces and brushing their hands with its cold, clammy fingers, leaving moisture and chill with every touch.

There was no thought of fear in Madge's mind. Why should there be? They were only a short distance from the hotel—a mile or so perhaps. One could almost hear a shout that far. Then, too, she was leaning upon a strong arm, and she enjoyed the sensation of being in the midst of a cloud as she enjoyed everything that was new.

"Why, see!" she exclaimed brightly, "it's so thick one can almost grasp a handful! Why, dear me! I can see it pass between me and your hat," she laughed

as she threw her head to one side and glanced upward. "And see the moisture on your coat!" she went on, rubbing her hand along his arm and flipping the water from her fingers.

Bob's eyes were fixed in front, and while she was wondering why he did not answer and seemed so quiet, a sudden gust of wind tore her hat from her head and in an instant whirled it out of sight into the all-surrounding gray.

With a short "Stand quite still, please," he hurried after it.

How odd it was to be there all alone!

There was something so solemn, so awful in the silence, the isolation, and the sombreness of the place! To be able to see and feel nothing save the rocks at her feet and the noiseless mist floating by, to hear nothing but the moaning of the wind, to realize that she might be within a few feet of a precipice and not know it!

It was like standing upon impalpable air and grasping at it helplessly with the world slipping away into the distance!

Madge shuddered; and there must have been something in the look that she turned upon Bob, who had appeared out of the gloom at her side so suddenly and noiselessly as to almost startle her, that showed the relief she felt in having him with her again, for his face, that was set and serious, softened into a reassuring smile; and the swift, eager glance of the eyes that she had noticed once before during the afternoon might have warned her that he, at least, was on dangerous ground. But it only caused a strange little fluttering of her heart as she replaced her hat and took his arm without a word.

In utter silence they traversed now what seemed to Madge to be a long distance.

It had been but a short time since the change had taken place, but already the wind had risen to a gale and the gloom had deepened into a black wall around them, while in the distance could be heard the roar and rattle and crash of the approaching storm that was already heralded by a few wandering flakes of snow that were whirled along too fast to find a resting-place.

Their pace had unconsciously slackened and now they were simply groping their way over the logs and stumps, around the bowlders, and between the swaying pines that arose one after another through the mist like a straggling column of retreating soldiers, when suddenly Bob uttered a surprised exclamation and stood still. Not five feet in front of them arose a solid wall of perpendicular rock, its boundaries lost in the mist!

Madge's glance of interrogation revealed to her the perplexity, anxiety, and irritation outlined in Bob's face and caused her to ask earnestly:

"Why, Mr. Barker, have you lost your way?"

Her only answer was a jagged, quivering glare that seemed to envelop them from every side, brightening up the scarped cliff in front and showing them upon its surface the cold, dank tufts of dark green moss between which the moisture was slowly trickling to the base. The very earth under them trembled, the air recoiled in terror, and the mountain seemed to split to its base with the almost simultaneous crash that followed.

The storm had overtaken them!

Madge tried to smile after she had relinquished her hysterical grasp of Bob's arm, but there was no answering smile from him, and a vague fear swept over her.

"I don't recognize this rock," he muttered in a low tone. "I seem to have lost the trail. Let's work our way along the face of this a little."

Once more the slow and hesitating march was resumed.

The fluttering flakes of snow had changed to tiny hail-stones that were rapidly whitening the ground. The first grand rush of the wind was over, and it had quieted down into a sullen moan that was merely an undertone to the great orchestra of heaven whose reverberating notes were ringing from peak to peak and rolling majestically down the valleys.

Faster and faster beat the hail, now rapidly changing back to snow; colder and colder moaned the wind as they wearily and silently picked their way along in the shadow of the dreary cliff.

Madge shivered perceptibly, and Bob, turning quickly, tore off his coat, and with a peremptory "Put it on,

please," threw it over her shoulders and buttoned it around her neck, paying no attention to her mild expostulation.

She did not persist in it, for his manner and voice allowed no refusal. She felt by this time that they were in some danger, though she could hardly tell how or why. True, it was growing very cold and was snowing heavily, but such a combination was not new to her, although she was rather lightly dressed. And what if they had temporarily lost their way? The storm would probably soon be over, even if they didn't find the trail before then. She might catch a very bad cold. And that would have been about the extent of her anxiety if it had not been for her companion's actions. She had never before seen him so quiet and preoccupied. He seemed to avoid looking at her—which was certainly very unusual for him. His almost constant smile was gone and his mouth firmly set. He seemed to be watching and listening like an animal who knows there are enemies ahead. If he would only talk to her reassuringly it would remove this vague uneasiness.

She could stand it no longer, and she asked, rather timidly for her, who had been used to the most child-like frankness and directness with him:

"Mr. Barker, is there much danger, do you think?"

He did not turn his head, but answered with a deliberation which only increased her anxiety:

"Not at present; but we are certainly lost for the moment, and I am afraid we are simply making a circle and returning to the spot we started from. I hope to find the trail again in a moment."

"How can you find it when the snow is covering it all up?"

The question came from her impulsively, and somehow she felt sorry the moment she asked it.

Poor Bob!

He had not deliberately lied to her, but he hadn't told the whole truth; and she had given utterance to the very question that was in his own mind.

"I think I could easily find my way by landmarks if the cloud would lift," he answered evasively.

She suspected now that he was concealing the truth

from her, and her temper and courage rose with the crisis. She said energetically:

"It is very unfair of you, Mr. Barker, to conceal any danger from me. I am entitled to know it. I am not a baby."

He stopped and turned upon her abruptly.

"The storm may last two or three hours, the snow get very deep and the cold intense. I can stand it, no doubt, because I am strong, but you—you——" the deep voice was a little uncertain here, and the two hands, that had involuntarily grasped her arms as he had turned, tightened convulsively—"you are delicate, you know——"

He did not finish, but before he turned his head away the same look came into his eyes again—the same, only a little different this time. There was no mistaking it. He might as well have said in so many words: "I love you!"

Madge's heart gave a great bound, and then there came a rush of tenderness toward the man who, as she had just discovered, would lay down his life to save hers. His strange mood was all clear to her now. And her own feelings were a revelation that almost shocked her. The hours she had spent with him were the shortest and sweetest she had ever known. She recalled the sense of security and of restfulness that his voice and presence always gave; the truthfulness and earnestness of his character; his constant and watchful devotion to her, which she had carelessly overlooked as mere gallantry; his exclamation and strange conduct that moonlit night upon the veranda when she had dropped her engagement ring and he had first guessed that she was pledged to another. And it was inevitable that with the swiftness of thought she should compare him with that other one in the East, with his boyish face, effeminate manner, and supercilious air of superiority, to whom, in their college days, she had bound herself. It startled her, for she had never before thought him effeminate or supercilious, and she felt guilty.

These thoughts hurried through her brain as she stood waiting while Bob was endeavoring to discover through the whirling whiteness some familiar landmark.

Somehow she could not feel very much alarmed with him by her side after all, notwithstanding his words. She realized now, however, that she was very cold and very faint, and that the pressure about her chest was growing heavier. The wind had risen again and the snow was beating angrily against their faces as though it wished to blind them.

Barker was by nature hopeful, persistent, and pugnacious, with a cool, quick brain in any physical emergency and with increasing resistance to increased obstacles. But he could scarcely see his hand before his face. The trail had long since been obliterated, and he was utterly at a loss what direction to take or what to do—except that Miss Chamberlain must be kept moving, if possible, to keep off that deathly chill until help should come or the storm should lift. His own teeth would have been chattering as hers were but for his indomitable will. He knew that she relied upon him and did not realize the danger. But would it not be better to impress the truth upon her? Would she not rise to the emergency and fight to the bitter end?

Her action at the moment decided him instantly. She had wearily sunk upon a log and was resting her face upon her hands. He sprang to her and said with decision:

"Miss Chamberlain, you must not give way like that. You must realize that we are in great danger and that if we let the cold benumb us we are lost."

Her pleading answer sent a great throb of fear through his heart, for it made plain to him that she was already under the influence of that awful spell which, like the charming of the snake, makes the approach of death seem like a dream.

"I am not cold now, but *so* tired! The storm will soon be over and they will come for us. Please wait here!"

Action was needed now. He had his vest left. Without a word he wrenched that off—lifted her to her feet—unbuttoned the coat that was around her—took it off—forced the vest upon her, not heeding the feeble motion with which she waved it away—fastened it—replaced the coat, and hurried her forward through the storm—anywhere—anywhere, he cared not where. But

they went only a short distance, when she tottered, stumbled, and almost fell, clasped her hands convulsively to her bosom and uttered an exclamation of pain. He put his arm closer around her, her head drooped heavily upon his shoulder and her voice came in a whisper:

"I can hardly breathe. I am too weak to walk. Leave me here, and if you can't get help, save yourself."

All restraint was gone now. He pressed her close to him with both arms and kissed her again and again.

"Leave you, Madge, when I brought you here? Leave all I care for on earth? I love you, I love you child! God forgive me for saying so, but I can't help it."

She drew herself back from him an instant, the color flamed again into the white face, the big eyes looked full into his, then closed slowly as she put out her arms like a tired child and was taken back into his embrace. He bent down closer to catch the words:

"And I love you, Robert. Surely there can be no harm in confessing it now, with death so near. I was not sure until this afternoon. God cannot blame me for telling you so. We will both soon be before Him and He will judge. Kiss me good-by, dear. I am *so* tired!"

He covered her long, dark eyelashes—her cold, blue lips—her moist hair—her marble-like cheeks and forehead with passionate kisses. Her feeble clasp about his neck strengthened a little, and she smiled gently.

The swirling snow and the wailing wind were nothing to him now. He raised his head, and underneath the joyous triumph in his eyes there was a desperate glitter as he glanced about him.

Death! Who talked of death? They should not die there like rats in a hole. Life was sweet to him now. The future was bright. She loved him and she was his by right. Was there no escape from this biting cold and pitiless snow? He would shout. The wild wind swept it away with a mocking burst of laughter. It was like shouting over the sea.

His voice was almost gone. If he only had his revolver with him he might make himself heard. Fool! fool to leave everything behind that would have been

useful! Robbins always carried a revolver. Surely they would try to signal. Hark! what was that? Only the roll of the distant thunder.

When the storm came up it was from the west and the wind was blowing toward the lake. Yes, he remembered that. The wind hadn't changed, and all he had to do was to follow it. Why hadn't he thought of this before? There was hope yet! He would carry her!

He lifted her in his arms and staggered forward a few feet. He had to give it up. His legs and arms were icy cold and his joints stiff. He must get his blood into circulation first. He would scrape away the snow and place Madge against that shelving rock. She seemed to be sleeping now. She was protected somewhat from the wind there. Now he would warm up a little and then carry her to the lake. All he had to do was to follow the direction of the wind.

Ah, how awkward of him to stumble like that! It must have been a stone that tripped him. What's that? Blood? He must have cut his forehead, then! How hard it is to get up again!

Oh, well! perhaps he had better lie down, and take a little nap and then—then—a-n-d t—h—e—n—

* * * * * *

The snow has ceased falling, and the wind's dreary monotone has died away to a mere whispering among the ghost-like pines that stand up cold and stark, like sentinels frozen on duty. The lifted and rapidly-shifting clouds are pierced here and there by tiny slanting shafts of sunshine that touch the snow with sparkling diamond points. Wider and longer grow the blue rifts in the rolling, hurrying, and dissolving mass of clouds above, whose color is slowly changing from black to gray. Suddenly, bursting through the ragged fringes of the western cloud curtain, the sinking sun touches with golden brush the pyramids, towers, minarets, and domes outlined in white relief against the hideous blackness of the swiftly-departing storm-clouds in the east. A beautiful rainbow poised on two marble peaks, and spanning the valley hangs in the eastern sky.

The snow is not deep and does not extend very far. One can easily see where its edge meets the green of

the valley below, and can almost hear the busy hum of the people far down the mountain side, so deathly still is it on the snow-capped peaks.

The man sleeps on quite comfortably in his shirt-sleeves, and the woman lies as quietly as though she had never known any other pillow than one of snow. Yet the cold is intense. The branches snap in the frosty air.

The sun has gone and the shadows are settling down upon the valley. It will be night soon.

* * * * * *

"God in heaven! Jim, look there!"

Robbins' strong bass voice was only a whisper.

"That's her, sir! And here he is! See! In his shirt-sleeves, too! And there's blood on the snow at his head!"

"What was the signal? Five double shots, wasn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right! Now—one! two! three! four! five! There! Have you got plenty of cartridges?"

"Plenty, sir."

"All right! Now let's turn him over. God! How white he is! Hush! I can't hear anything, but I think I feel a slight beat! Take off his shoe! Light a match, quick! Ah! he feels that burn! Thank God! Pour the whiskey down him while I go to her. First let's give 'em another signal! Hark! They've answered. They're coming! Shout, Jim! Poor little girl, I'm afraid we're too late for you. She seems very stiff, and I can't hear or feel any movement of the heart at all! You had a great head, Jim, to think of bringing those burros. We'd had a hard time carrying them back. Better not try to do anything here but give them whiskey. It won't take long to get them to the house and then we can go to work on them in dead earnest. Ah! there's her sister!"

"Is she dead, Mr. Robbins?"

"I hope not, Miss Grace. It will take some time to tell, though, after we get her in bed. Quick, bring that burro here, Mike! Never mind the dress, Miss Grace. We mustn't stand on ceremony now. It's a case of life and death! There! Balance her in that

way. That will take the weight off of us and we can rub her limbs as we go along."

* * * * * *

Mr. Robbins, manager and principal owner of the great Denver smelter, looked up over his glasses, his coffee, and his paper at his wife, who was busily engaged with pencil and paper on the opposite side of the breakfast-table.

"My dear, you remember the two Chamberlain girls who were here last fall?"

Mrs. Robbins was making out a list for a very select "tea" and was consequently much preoccupied.

"Yes, dear. Shall I put their names down?"

"No, no, I didn't mean that. They are not here, anyway. By the way, though, I saw them when I was down at the Springs yesterday. But don't you remember it was the little one that was caught in the snowstorm with Barker up at Green Lake last fall, and had such a hard pull with pneumonia? And you know we couldn't understand why they moved her down to the Springs before she was really well, and even before Barker got around himself. You thought there was something between her and him, although I told you she was engaged to young Colby, son of Chamberlain's partner. Well, here is a fine story from Boston this morning about the boy. Listen:

"'A scandal in aristocratic circles that has been suppressed for several months through the strenuous exertions of the two families interested came to the surface yesterday, when it was discovered that the son of millionaire Colby, of the well-known firm of Chamberlain & Colby, who had forged his father's name for nearly $100,000, was legally married to the notorious variety actress, Fanny Leslie, with whom he is now said to be travelling in Europe. Of course the forgeries were quietly settled long since by the old gentleman; and the matter would have been kept quiet but for the accidental discovery of the marriage by an inquisitive reporter. A sad feature of the affair is that the young scapegrace has been for a long time engaged to a daughter of the senior partner, and the wedding-day was actually set some time since, the postponement being explained on the ground that the young lady's

failing health necessitated a sudden return to Colorado Springs, where she is at present. It is said that Colby will disinherit——'"

The reading was interrupted at this point by the appearance of a servant with a note for Mr. Robbins, whose puzzled and surprised look gave way gradually to a genial smile as he perused the nervously-written missive, laid it down, took off his glasses, and answered his wife's look of interrogation :

"Barker asks for a week's leave of absence on personal business. You were right, dear, after all. He has seen the paper this morning, and he'll be at the Springs before sundown."

The story of a man who "never had no show," told by William Wallace Cook in the Chicago *Figaro*.

BOB GORMAN'S LETTERS.

MR. BARLOW was in a reminiscent mood that evening.

"Poor Bob Gorman!" he said musingly. "I have often said, Mr. Whomso, that in this day and age of the world there was no excuse for a person growing to man's estate without being able to read, at least fairly, and write well enough for his every-day business or social requirements. But my experience with Bob Gorman slightly modified that opinion.

"Bob had been born and reared in the very wildest of the Montana mining and grazing districts. He absolutely had never had the opportunity to acquire the slightest knowledge from text-books or by oral instruction, and when I saw him, some two years ago, he was a strapping fellow, warm-hearted as a woman, but illiterate to the last degree.

"He came here from Montana with a herd of bronco ponies to dispose of to the settlers around Skytown. We were thrown together many times in a business way, and I came to admire Bob Gorman for his manly qualities and strict attention to the interests of his employer. He seemed to like me, also, and would come to the store and talk for hours at a time about life in the mines and ranches west of the Missouri.

"One day he came to me with a letter.

"'Mr. Barlow,' he said, in a half-hesitating way, 'will you please read this to me?'

"'Why, can't you read?' I exclaimed in surprise, without pausing to think a second time.

"Gorman blushed painfully. I would have given almost anything to unsay the words.

"'Y' see, I ain't never had no chance——'

"'I understand, Bob. Yes, I'll read it for you.'

"'It's from Nance—my wife,' Gorman explained, and an expression of great happiness beamed from his eyes. 'Nance, she lives at Mingersville, an' she's the

finest girl in Montanny, you can bet on *that.* I'm goin' to own a ranch of my own, one o' these days, an' then I'll be fixed so I can stay at home with Nance an' not have to go knockin' roun' the country, sellin' broncos. Please read the letter, sir.'

"The writing was almost illegible and the third person was used all through the letter, so it was evidently from another's hand. It told how 'Nance was sick of a feever, but was a-gettin' 'long' and 'sends her love to Bob, wishin' he'd cum home soon as possibel.'

"The happiness faded out of Gorman's face the moment he heard of his wife's illness, and when I finished the letter his voice trembled as he asked:

"'Is that all, Mr. Barlow? Don't it say how she is, nor nothin' more 'bout what ails her?'

"'No,' I answered with deep sympathy.

"'My God! I wish't I knew!'

"He remained in silent meditation for a few moments.

"'I wouldn't worry,' I said: 'it can't be very serious.'

"He shook his head forebodingly.

"'She'd never a let 'em write to me that way if it wa'n't. 'Tain't like her. I'll fix up my things here an' go back, quick as I can,' he said, and walked hurriedly away.

"In a short time he returned with a postal card.

"'Just say for me, Mr. Barlow, that I'm cummin' home. Begin it Dear Nance—but you know how. She's sick an' I want it to be kinder lovin'. Tell her I'll be there just as soon as I can get things fixed here. Send it to Nance Gorman, Mingersville, Dawson County, Montanny. Be sure an' put on the county, 'cause it's a small place an' I want her to get that, sure.'

"I complied with his request and he left the store.

"In a couple of days he came back to me again. He had an old satchel in his hand and his face was fairly aglow with pleasure.

"'Where are you bound for, Bob?'

"'Montanny,' he said, slapping his satchel brusquely. 'I'll be with Nance inside o' twenty-four hours. I feel like a boy, Mr. Barlow—been away three months, y'

know. I only hope she's better. I'll leave Ole Rumsey in charge o' the herd. Give him anythin' he wants on credit—it's all right.'

"He fumbled in his pocket and finally drew out a letter.

"'Got a letter here. Guess it's from Newt Tremble; he runs the Ten-Strike Ranch—the one I work for, y' know. 'Least, I think it's from him; it looks like his handwrite. If you'll just read it to me, now——'

"'Certainly,' I answered with a smile. His happiness was infectious.

"I opened the letter and a glance at its contents startled me. Here is the way it read:

DEER BOB

i tak mi pen In han toe lett you kno That nance she dide last nite hard luck Ole chap dont feel toe Bad cum home soon from

CLAPPER.

"'What does it say, Mr. Barlow?' asked Bob anxiously, noting my changing countenance.

"How could I tell him! Here he was, all ready to start for home, anticipating a joyful meeting with his wife, and it was reserved for me to dash his hopes—mayhap break his heart.

"'Bob,' I answered huskily, 'this isn't from your employer.'

"'Ain't it from Newt? Who is it from, then?'

"'Do you know any one by the name of Clapper?'

"'Clapper? Oh, yes—he's a foreman of Newt's. What does he say?'

"I did not reply.

"'Anythin' wrong at the ranch?'

"Unconsciously a tear must have come to my eye, for Bob Gorman caught my arm as in a vise.

"'Read that letter!' he commanded in a harsh voice.

"I read it to him, slowly, solemnly, sympathetically. He stood like a stone for some minutes after I had finished. I tell you, Whomso, that silence was awful. I could do absolutely nothing to console the man who stood before me filled with a grief that was wrecking his life.

"'Great God!' he finally exclaimed, tossing his arms above his head and staggering like a drunken

man. I tried to catch his hand, but he shook me off and fled.

"I never saw him after that; but one day old Rumsey came to me.

"'Got a letter from the ranch,' he said in a trembling voice, and what do you think has become of Bob?'

"'What?' I asked eagerly.

"'Dead,' said Rumsey sadly. 'Some of the boys found him on the perary with a bullet-hole in his heart. You can bet there was foul play somewhere—why, Bob didn't have an enemy in the world.'

"Ah, but he had one enemy and that was—his fate!

"That is why I excuse ignorance."

Necessity is a grim, but a most successful teacher. It has accomplished wonders, but rarely anything more wonderful than what it did for this soldier, whose story is told by Don Pedro A. de Alarcon, the famous Spanish writer. The translation was made for ROMANCE by E. J. Fagundus.

DON BASILIO'S STORY.

I.

"DON BASILIO, play the cornet and let us dance! It is not warm under the trees."

"Yes, yes, Don Basilio, play the cornet!"

"Give Don Basilio the cornet on which Joaquin learned."

"No use! Will you play it, Don Basilio?"

"No!"

"Why not?"

"No, I say!"

"But why not?"

"Because I do not know how."

"Not know how! Was there ever such hypocrisy!"

"Of course you desire to gratify us?"

"Well, come! We know that you were chief musician of the infantry!"

"And that no one played the cornet as you did."

"And that they listened to you at the palace, in the time of Espartero——"

"And that you have a pension."

"Come, Don Basilio! Have pity on us!"

"Well, then, señor. It is true! I have played the cornet; I was a—a specialist, as you say nowadays; however, it is also true that two years ago I presented my cornet to a poor licensed musician, and that since then I have not wished even to sound it."

"What a pity!"

"Another Rossini!"

"Ah! since it is this evening you ought to play!"

"Here in the fields, everything is permissible——"

"Remember that it is my birthday, grandpapa!"

"Hurrah! hurrah! Here is the cornet!"

"Yes, now play!"

"A waltz!"

"No, a polka!"

"Polka! away with you! A fandango!"

"Yes, yes, a fandango, the national dance!"

"I am very sorry, my children; but I cannot possibly play the cornet."

"You, so amiable!"

"So willing to please——"

"Your little grandchild begs you to!"

"And your niece——"

"Leave me alone, for God's sake! I have said that I cannot play."

"Why not?"

"Because I do not remember; and because, moreover, I have sworn not to learn again——"

"To whom have you sworn?"

"To myself and to some one who is dead—to your poor mother, my child!"

Every face saddened suddenly on hearing these words.

"Ah! if you knew at what a cost I learned to play the cornet!" added the old man.

"The story! the story!" exclaimed the young people. "Tell us the story."

"In fact," said Don Basilio, "it is quite a story. Listen to it, and you may judge if I can or cannot play the cornet." And seating himself under a tree, surrounded by the curious and courteous young people, he told the story of his music lessons.

In the same way Mazzepa, Byron's hero, related one night to Carlos XII. beneath another tree, the terrible story of his riding-lessons. Let us listen to Don Basilio:

II.

Seventeen years ago Spain was agitated by the civil war. Carlos and Isabel were disputing for the crown, and the Spaniards, divided into two bands, poured out their blood in the fratricidal struggle.

I had a friend, called Ramón Gámez, lieutenant of my battalion, the most clever man that I have ever known. We were educated together; together we left college; together we had been reprimanded a

thousand times, and together we desired to die for liberty. Ah! I must say he was more liberal than I or than any one else in the whole army!

But a certain injustice had been done by our chief to the hurt of Ramón; one of those abuses of authority which disgusts one with the most honorable profession. This arbitrary act made the lieutenant of the Cazadores desire to abandon the ranks of his brothers, the friend to leave the friend, the liberal to turn to the faction, the subordinate to kill his lieutenant-colonel! Ramón was not in the mood so early in the morning to bear insults and injustice.

Neither my threats nor prayers were sufficient to dissuade him from his purpose. He had decided to change the helmet for the cap, although he abhorred the rebels.

We were then within three leagues of the enemy. It was the night in which Ramón was to desert, a cold, rainy night, melancholy and sad, the eve of a battle.

About two o'clock Ramón entered my lodging.

I was asleep.

"Basilio," he murmured in my ear.

"Who is it?"

"It is I. Adieu!"

"Thou art going now?"

"Yes; adieu."

And seizing my hand—"Listen," he continued. "If there should be a battle to-morrow, as they think, and we should meet in it——"

"I understand: we are friends."

"Very well; we will embrace and then fight. I shall die in the regular way to-morrow; however, I hope to trample all under foot till I have killed the lieutenant-colonel! As for thee, Basilio, do not expose thyself to danger—glory is only smoke."

"And life?"

"Thou art right; make thyself commander!" exclaimed Ramón. "The pay is not smoke—until after one has smoked it. Ah! all that is ended for me!"

"What sad thoughts," I said, not without terror. "We shall both survive the battle to-morrow."

"Then let us arrange to meet afterward."

"Where?"

"At the San Nicolás Inn, at one in the morning. Death alone shall prevent the meeting. Let us agree to it?"

"Agreed."

"Then—adieu!"

"Adieu."

Having said this, and after tenderly embracing me, Ramón disappeared into the shadows of the night.

III.

As we hoped, the rebels attacked us on the following day.

The action was very bloody and lasted from three in the afternoon till it grew dark. About five my battalion was fiercely attacked by a force commanded by Ramón. Ramón now wore the badges of commander and the white cap of the Carlists.

I gave the order to fire against Ramón, and Ramón against me; that is to say, his men and my battalion fought hand to hand.

We were victorious, and Ramón was put to flight with the small remnant of his force; but not without first having himself killed with a pistol-shot him who the evening before was his lieutenant-colonel, and who in vain tried to defend himself from the fury of Ramón. At six o'clock the action took an unfavorable turn, and I and a part of my poor company were cut off and obliged to surrender.

They led me to the little village of ——, which had been occupied by the Carlists since the beginning of this campaign, and where it was certain they would shoot me immediately. The war was then without quarter.

IV.

It was one o'clock in the morning after that melancholy day—the hour of my rendezvous with Ramón!

I was confined in the dungeon of the public prison of the enemy. I asked for my friend and they answered me: "He is a brave man! He killed a lieutenant-colonel, but he perished during the last hour of the battle."

"How! Why do you think so?"

"Because he has not returned to the camp nor can the men who to-day were under his command give any account of him."

Ah! how I suffered that night! One hope I still had. Ramón might be waiting for me at the San Nicolás Inn; this would explain his failure to return to the rebel encampment. How distressed he would be to find that I did not keep the appointment!

"He will," I said to myself, "think me dead! And truly how far am I from my last hour? The rebels always shoot their prisoners, the same as we do!"

Thus dawned the following day.

A chaplain entered my prison. All my companions were asleep. "Death?" I exclaimed at sight of the priest.

"Yes," he answered gently.

"Now?"

"No; within three hours."

A minute later my companions were awake.

A thousand cries, a thousand sobs, a thousand curses filled the prison.

V.

Every man who is about to die is possessed by some idea which will not leave him.

Whether it were nightmare, fever, or madness, the thought of Ramón—of Ramón alive, of Ramón dead, of Ramón in heaven, of Ramón in the inn, took possession of my brain in such a way that I could think of nothing else during those hours of agony. They took from me my captain's uniform and dressed me in a soldier's cap and an old cloak.

Thus I went to meet death with my nineteen companions in misfortune.

Only one was to be saved from death.

He was a musician—and the Carlists did not shoot musicians, because they were in great need of them in their battalions.

"And were you a musician, Don Basilio? Were you saved on that account?" asked all the young people with one voice.

"No, my children," replied the veteran. "I was not a musician!"

The square was formed and we were placed in the middle of it.

I was number eleven—that is, I would be the eleventh to die.

Then I thought of my wife and my daughter, of thee and of thy mother, my child! They began to fire.

Those detonations maddened me. As they had bound our eyes I did not see my companions fall.

I tried to count the discharges, that I might know a moment before dying that my sojourn in this world was finished. However, at the third or fourth detonation I lost count.

Ah! those shots will thunder eternally in my heart and in my brain as they thundered on that day!

Now I heard them a thousand leagues distant; now I felt them reverberate in my head. And the detonations continued.

"Now!" thought I.

The discharge sounded and I still lived.

"This one!" I said at last.

Then I felt myself seized by the shoulders and shaken, and voices sounded in my ears. I fell.

I knew no more.

Then I experienced something like a profound sleep. I dreamed that I had been shot dead.

VI.

I dreamed that I was stretched on a small bed in my prison. I could not see.

I raised my hand to my eyes to take away the bandage and touched my wide-open, dilated eyes. Was I blind?

No. I was in the prison, in utter darkness.

I heard the toll of a bell, and trembled.

It was the ringing of the *animas*.

"It is nine o'clock," I thought, "but what day?"

A shadow, still darker than the dark air of the prison, leaned over me.

It appeared to be a man. And the others—the other eighteen?

All had been shot!

And I?

Did I live or was I delirious in the grave? My lips mechanically murmured a name; always his name, my nightmare—"Ramón!"

"What is it?" the shadow beside me answered.

I shuddered.

"My God!" I exclaimed. "Am I in the other world?"

"No!" answered the same voice.

"Ramón, art thou alive?"

"Yes."

"And I?"

"Thou also."

"Then where am I? Is this the San Nicolás Inn? Was I not taken prisoner? Have I dreamed it all?"

"No, Basilio; thou hast dreamed nothing. Listen.

VII.

"As thou knowest, yesterday I killed the lieutenant-colonel in fair fight. I am revenged! Then, mad with fury, I kept on fighting and killing till it grew dark, till there was not a Christian on the battle-field. When the moon arose I remembered thee. Then I directed my steps toward the San Nicolás Inn, with the intention of waiting for thee.

"It was ten o'clock. The appointment was for one, and the night before I had not closed my eyes. So I slept profoundly. About one I gave a cry and awoke. I dreamed that thou wast dead. I looked about me and found I was alone. What had become of thee? It struck two, three, four—what a night of anguish!

"Thou didst not appear.

"Without doubt thou wast dead!

"Day dawned.

"Then I left the inn and directed my steps to this village in search of the rebels. The sun arose.

"Every one thought that I had fallen the day before.

"Thus at sight of me they embraced me and the general loaded me with honors.

"Then I learned that they were about to shoot twenty-one prisoners. A presentiment arose in my mind.

"'Could Basilio be one of them?' I asked myself. I

ran then to the place of execution. The square was formed.

"I heard several shots.

"They had begun to shoot the prisoners.

"I strained my eyes, but I could not see.

"Grief blinded me. I was delirious with fear.

"Finally I distinguished thee.

"Thou wast about to be shot!

"There were two victims only before thee.

"What should I do?

"I became crazy; I screamed; seized thee in my arms, and with a hoarse voice trembling with emotion exclaimed:

"'Not this one! Not this one, my general!'

"The general who commanded the square and who knew me for my deeds of the day before, asked me:

"'Why not? Is he a musician?'

"That word was to me what it would be to an old man blind from birth to see suddenly the sun in all its brightness.

"The light of hope shone so vividly in my eyes that it blinded me.

"'Musician!' I exclaimed; 'yes—yes, general! He is a musician—a great musician!'

"In the mean time thou wast stretched senseless.

"'What instrument does he play?' asked the general.

"'The — the — the — yes! — exactly! — it is — the cornet!'

"'Do you need a cornet player?' asked the general, turning to the band of musicians.

"In five seconds, which seemed five centuries, came the answer:

"'Yes, general; there is one needed,' replied the chief musician.

"'Then take that man from the ranks and let the execution continue instantly,' exclaimed the Carlist chief.

"'Then I took thee in my arms and carried thee to this dungeon."

VIII.

As Ramón ceased speaking I got up, and weeping, laughing, and trembling I embraced him.

"I owe thee my life!"

"Not at all!" replied Ramón.

"And why not?" I exclaimed.

"Dost thou play the cornet?"

"No."

"Then thou dost not owe me thy life. I have only compromised mine without saving thee."

I turned cold as a stone.

"And music?" asked Ramón, "dost thou know it?"

"A little, very little. I remember what they taught us at college——"

"A very little it is, or better say none! Thou shalt die without fail, and I also, as traitor. Just imagine: in less than two weeks the band to which thou shalt belong will be organized."

"Two weeks!"

"Neither more nor less! And as thou dost not play the cornet (unless God performs a miracle) they will shoot us both without doubt."

"Shoot thee!" I exclaimed; "thee! and for me! for me, who owes thee my life! Ah! no, Heaven forbid! In less than two weeks I shall understand music and play the cornet."

Ramón laughed.

IX.

What more shall I tell you, my children? In two weeks—oh, power of the will—in fifteen days, with the fifteen nights (for I neither slept nor rested a minute for half a month), in two weeks I learned to play the cornet! What days they were!

Ramón and I left the camp and passed hours and hours with a certain musician who came daily from a place near by to give me a lesson. *Escape?* I read the word in your eyes. Nothing more impossible! I was a prisoner and they watched me, and Ramón would not escape without me.

I neither spoke, thought, nor ate.

I was crazy, and my monomania was music—the cornet, the devilish cornet!

I desired to learn, and I learned!

And if I had been dumb I should have talked.

And if paralyzed should have walked. if blind should have seen.

Because *I willed* it so!

Oh! the will can do anything!

To wish is to be able.

To wish—that is a great word!

To wish—and I advise you, children, learn this great truth!

I saved, then, my life and Ramón's. But I was mad, and my madness was art. During three years the cornet did not leave my hand. Do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-si; that was my world during all that time. My life was reduced to blowing. Ramón did not leave me. I emigrated to France, and in France I continued to play the cornet.

The cornet was I! I sang with the cornet at my mouth! Men, people, celebrated artists crowded to hear me.

Here was a wonder, a marvel. The cornet was flexible in my fingers; became elastic, moaned, wept, cried, and roared; it imitated a prayer, a human sob, or a wild beast.

My lungs were of iron. Thus passed two more years. At the end of them my friend died. Looking upon his body, I recovered my reason. And when, now in my senses, I took up the cornet one day, to my astonishment I found I did not know how to play it.

Will you ask me now to play it for you to dance?

As Mark Twain said, when it comes to babies, "we've all been there." The gruffest old bachelor and woman hater will enjoy this pathetically humorous account of the adventures of a young woman of five years of age in a barber-shop. It was written for the New York *Evening Sun* by Acton Davies.

DIMPLE AND DUMPLING.

THERE was only one chair vacant in a down-town barber-shop the other day when a tall young man, accompanied by a lady and a lovely little girl of five, entered, and calling the head barber to one side, gave him a few explicit directions. Then the little girl's hat was removed and the barber enveloped her in one of the big white aprons. The young man lifted her up into the barber's chair with a whispered word of reassurance, and the lady, after kissing her, passed her hands caressingly over all the beautiful golden brown curls. Then she sat down in a corner where the child could not see her face and pulled out her pocket handkerchief.

By this time the occupants of the five other chairs had become vastly interested. All eyes were fixed on the sweet baby face with its curly halo. It was a pale little face, and there were no rosebuds on its cheeks, but above them were two glorious gray eyes that shone like a pair of stars. On each side of the little face rested a particularly fat curl. The child placed her hand upon each as the barber advanced with the big shears, and gazed beseechingly up into his face.

"Now, Mr. Barber, I want you to leave Dimple and Dumpling until the very last—cut all the rest of them off first, please. I shall miss them dreffully, you know; me and Dimple and Dumpling has always been such friends. Dimple is going out to my papa in a letter. My papa is way out in Ceylon, you know. You haven't got a papa way out in Ceylon, Mr. Barber?"

"No, miss, I ain't got none at all."

"And haven't you got a mamma, Mr. Barber? My mamma is going to put Dumpling into her 'Don't You Remember' box. Did you ever see a 'Don't You Remember' box, Mr. Barber?"

"No, miss, I never did."

"Mamma's has got such a funny lot of things in it. There's a little bit of orange blossom, and a little pinafore that Alec used to wear. That's Alec over there by the window. And there's a little red shoe that was our little bruffer's. His name was Robin, and he died before any of us was borned, you know."

At this moment the mother stepped forward and whispered to the little girl. There was an old gentleman with a very red face in one of the chairs who shook like a veritable jelly at the child's remark. Big brother Alec was blushing furiously and the whole barber-shop was all agog.

There was silence for a moment or two, while the scissors went snip, snip, snip. Then the little prattler broke forth again.

"Mamma says I'm talking too much, Mr. Barber; but if I don't talk I shall begin to cry. I cried awfully yesterday, you know; so did mamma and nurse. That was when the doctor came and said they'd have to be cutted off. We all cried—'cept Cecil. He's eight years old. He never cries—'cepting when mamma spanks him. Then he howls. But at last I stopped crying, for Alec said he'd take me to lunch with him when we came in to have it done; nurse said she'd let me sit up till half-past seven for a whole week; mamma's going to get me a silver thimble, and cook is going to have waffles for tea when we get back. Do you like waffles, Mr. Barber?"

The barber replied in the affirmative, and then there was silence for a little while.

"Have you got a sweetheart, Mr. Barber?" A titter ran around the room, and the barber turned as red as his pole outside, but he replied in the negative.

"Alec's got one," pursued the child. "He goes to tea with her on Sunday. Cecil says he's awfully sweet on her. Cecil knows, too; he was under the sofa when——"

But Alec waited to hear no further. He bolted bodily and waited on the corner until the ordeal was at an end. The lady arose and whispered some further cautions, but they proved of no avail.

"Well, Mr. Barber, if you haven't got any sweetheart

or papa or mamma, you must be a norphan. Are you a norphan, Mr. Barber?"

The man nodded his head and then asked his questioner to keep her head still, like a good girl.

Another pause. Then:

"Mr. Barber?"

"Yes, miss."

"If you is a norphan what does you say when you go to bed? You can't say 'God bless papa and mamma' any more. I'm very glad I'm not a norphan."

There was a dead silence in the room after that until the red-faced old gentleman blew his nose. The barber's task was almost finished now.

"What's the matter, mamma? Your're cryin'."

"Why, no, I'm not, Lena. What makes——"

"Oh, but yes you are, mamma. I can hear you sniffling, and besides, I can see your face in the looking-glass. There's two big tears running down your nose."

"Now, miss, just please sit steady a minute."

The scissors gave a snip, and poor Dumpling fell down into her lap. Dimple followed an instant later, and the child gazed ruefully at the two beautiful severed curls.

"Good-by, Dumpling and Dimple," she said, and the tears began to gather. They almost overflowed a moment later as the barber lifted her from the chair and she walked to the long mirror to survey herself. But her mother was equal to the emergency. Before Lena had time to realize her changed appearance she called to her to come and help her put Dimple into the letter for Ceylon. The mother wound the two curls about her finger and then tied a little bit of blue ribbon round each of them. She put Dumpling away in her reticule and Dimple was placed among the closely-written sheets of foreign paper which she took out of an envelope. The letter was sealed then, and after that they arose to go.

"Thank you very much, Mr. Barber," said the little child, holding her hand out. "When me and Cecil get whiskers we'll come to you to cut them off. Do you play base-ball, Mr. Barber? 'Cause if you do I'm going to give you a present. Would you like a ticket for our base-ball match, Mr. Barber?"

She pulled out a little bit of pasteboard from her pocket and handed it to him:

GRAND BASEBALL MATCH.

DICK TURPINS VS.
TUSCARORAHS.
Admishun, 3 Pins.

"Cecil is captain of the Dick Turpins, and he said now that I was going to have my hair cut off I'd be just as good as a boy. So he's going to lend me a pair of his trousers and I'm to be second base."

A roar arose from each respective chair; as for the jolly old gentleman, he collapsed utterly. In the midst of the confusion the lady tried to escape, but Lena's hat had to be put on and that caused still another delay.

"No more snarls in the morning now, mamma," remarked the young lady as she put it on. But then she drew a very long face. "O mamma, it wabbles dreadfully."

The barber then slipped some paper inside the lining of the hat and they set off.

But just at the doorway the red-faced old gentleman accosted them. He had his hat on by this time, but he took it off immediately and made a most courteous bow.

"Madam," he exclaimed, "there are two things I want particularly, and you can grant me both of them. I want a kiss from that little daughter of yours and a ticket for that base-ball match. I can't pay the price of admission, for I haven't three pins to my name, but perhaps this," and as he spoke he slipped something bright and shiny into Lena's hand, "to be devoted to soda-water after the Tuscaroras have been completely done up, might answer the purpose just as well."

The lady smiled and allowed Lena to give him the desired kiss, but she handed him back the money and could not be prevailed upon to accept it. Then with a parting nod to the barber the two joined Alec on the corner. When last seen Lena was lifted up to the letter-box to dispatch Dimple on the first stage of its long journey, and the red-faced gentleman, as he lost sight of her in the crowd on Broadway, vowed fervently that he would see that game of base-ball even if it cost a leg.

Love and politics play a very important part in this drama. The story is homely—there are no glittering squires and splendid dames and prancing steeds; but it is true to life and is full of genuine human nature. It is from the *Yankee Blade* and was written by Milton T. Adkins.

THE 'LECTION AT MINDAB KESTER'S.

CHAPTER I.

THE Shockly House stood upon the verge of a table-like mountain. Looking eastward from the long, rambling, oddly-contrived log-built structure, one took in a broad expanse of sandy fields in a rather discouraged state of cultivation, fringed in the distance by a stunted growth of oak and pine.

On the west, breaking away almost from the very doorsteps, lay the blue aërial depths of Elkhorn Cove.

Southwardly, a ragged succession of fantastic cliffs and blasted pines marked the mountain's brow.

On the north, scattered over a few sandy acres, was the village of Possumwalk.

This rather peculiar cognomen was not the legal name of the proud county seat of Uchee County, but had been given in derision to the new town, by the inhabitants of the lowland portion of the county, during one of those contests over the location of the seat of justice so common in certain sections of our country.

It was an undecided question whether Possumwalk were located near Dab Kester's or Dab Kester's near Possumwalk.

Given one of those frequent occasions during the year when every able-bodied man in the county goes up to "cou't;" station yourself beside one of the incoming highways, and put to the passers-by, couched in the vernacular, the interrogative salutatory:

"Whar you gwyin'?"

And your answers would run about thus:

"Gwyin' up to Dab's."

"Gwyin' up to Mindab's."

"Gwyin' up to the Walk."

"Gwyin' up to Possumwalk."

"Gwyin' up to cou't."

Whether you approached the village from the valley or from the mountain, you passed in front of the hostelry aforesaid, and almost beneath a rusty sign bearing the legend:

THE ShOcKly
HouSe
DabKesTer ProP.

That the proprietor of the Shockly House was a man of affairs in the new town and county goes without further saying.

He was justice of the peace, a "code" lawyer, a thorough-going politician, and on occasion could turn his talents to medical practice or a theological argument.

His family consisted of one daughter, Linda, the apple of his eye, and his wife, Maria, whom he regarded with a feeling, the resultant compound of about equal parts of respect, fear, and affection.

On the last Sunday morning of a certain July he sat upon the back porch, smoking a little and thinking a great deal.

Two subjects engaged his attention. One was the election, which would take place next Thursday; and the other was a consideration of the question whether Maria would get off to "meetin'" without first giving him a "chunk of her mind."

She might have done so if he had kept quiet, but with fatuous garrulity he invited his own fate.

"I thes been thinking, ole ooman, whuther hit wouldn't do me more good to set here this mawnin' an' look out'n the po'ch 'n down the valley than it would to go'n hear Eli Stooksberry preach—tho' I 'low he do preach some powerful sarmints sometimes."

"Mindab Kester," Maria answered sharply from the kitchen door, "ef I's called on this minit to p'int out a missuble backslidin' sinner, 'at needs a powerful sarmint preached right plumb at the top o' his old bald head, I think I'd haf to p'int right straight at you an' say 'thar he is,' but I dunno 's hit makes much diffunce whuther you go or stay; kase you'll go to sleep anyway."

"Hut tut, ole ooman!" he made answer, nettled

at the sharp words; "hut tut! hut tut! 'Tain't the gwyin' to meetin' an' the settin' in the amen cornder 'at's a-gwyin' to take folks to heaven. No, siree; when Gabr'el toots that ar' ho'n o' his'n, an' we all stan' up in a row, 'n they open out thar books, 'n begins to ax thar queschuns, the fust on the list won't be wantin' to know whuther ye sot down yander in the amen cornder 'n looked on whiles Eli Stooksberry tuck some pore sinner by the back o' the naik 'n the slack o' the britches, 'n shuck 'im over the lake o' fire 'n brimstone. No, siree; but they'll want to know—not 'at I'm a-findin' any fault 'ith you, 'Riar," he hastened to interpolate, as the portly figure with arms akimbo reappeared in the doorway, "because I've said to myself time an' agin, 'Dab Kester, ef thar's a good ooman on this mounting, one that's a-walkin' in the straight an' narrer way, a-turnin' nuther to the right nur to the left, that ooman's yer wife; an' sez I furder to myself, sez I, ef thar's a ornary good-fer-nothin' cuss to be foun' anywhar between Crab O'chard 'n the Kaintucky line, Dab Kester, you're that ornary cuss.' "

"Thar's one thing you can do, Mindab," and her eyes twinkled in a way he did not like.

"What's that?" he asked dubiously.

"Tell the truth—sometimes, about yourself."

"Y-a-a-s," he assented reluctantly.

"An' I have knowed wuss men on this mounting—'fore ole Sile Polston 'n his boys 's tuck off to Nashville fer makin' moonshine whiskey in Wil' Cat Holler."

"Sho, now, ole ooman, you allus wus the powerfullest han' to joke; you're wusser to joke 'an Hank Pyles; an' I bet thar hain't sich 'nother one 's he ar' this side o' Cum'erlan' River. Say," he continued, as he saw her about to speak, "did I ever tell you about that joke—the story I hearn 'im a-tellin' the last time he 's up here, to that feller 'at wore a one-eyed par o' spectickles, 'at's down here fum Cincinnatty, a-lookin' fer timber in the cove?"

"I dunno 's ye ever did," she answered, "but you done mighty right to call hit a story, kase ef thar's a man anywhar on the Elkhorn River 'at can jist nacherly lie like a duck c'n swim, that man ar' Hank Pyles."

"Tut, ole ooman, I don't mean that sort of a story, but one o' the kind 'at Judge Jeems Rand'off calls a anecdote. Well, this little joke o' Hank's 'at I hearn 'im a-tellin' to the band-shanked feller 'ith the one-eyed par o 'specks 's sorter this way: Ye know Hank——"

"Yes, I know Hank," she interrupted, "an' what's more, Dab Kester, I know you, thes 's ef I'd mixed up the mud you 's made out'n an' seed you sot out in the sun to dry; I know you all over, Dab Kester, 'n all yer gab. Thar's more palaver in that limber tongue o' your'n than a whole cou't house full o' lawyers—speshul whar you got airy eend to 'complish."

"What eend I got?"

"You thes wait, Dab Kester, now you hear my ho'n. You know well 'nough I'm a-gwyin' to give you a piece o' my min'; an' you been a-goin' thew all that palaver a-hopin' you c'd thow me off'n the track."

He made one last desperate effort to avert the impending vials of wrath.

"Now, 'Riar Kester, what's the use a-goin' a-rackin' an' a-grabblin' in them ole ashes, an' hit a Sunday mawnin' an' time you's a-gittin' ready to go an' hear Eli Stooksberry preach?"

"Never you min' 'bout Eli Stooksberry an' his preachin'; I'll be thar in time, you c'n thes depen'. I gwyin' preach a little sarmint o' my own fust."

"Whatever people see in that man," he muttered, "to crack 'im up 's sich a big gun fur, 's more'n I c'n see. Some folks 'low 'at the Lord called 'nother man, 'n Eli answered."

"Never you min' 'bout no calls fur Eli Stooksberry; *I* got a call to tell you some pinted trewths, Dab Kester, an' you c'n thes depen' I gwyin' do hit 'ithout no multiplyin' o' words."

"My own 'pinion," continued the now desperate man, "ar' that he never hearn no call, but he thes got skeered at a grubbin'-hoe."

"Mindab Kester!" In a voice that warned him to go no further. "'Tain't no use fur you to be a-flinchin' an' a-squirmin'. I'm boun' to give you a piece o' my min' this very mawnin'."

"He got skeered at a grubbin'-hoe, at's what he done."

"Yes, an' ef he done what some other people, which thar fust name 's Dab Kester, 'n The'dore Brown has, he mought git skeered at the sher'ff, 'n the co't house, 'n the jail-house, 'n maybe wusser'n that."

"Ooman, what you mean?" and the mountaineer's voice was like the growl of an animal at bay.

"You, Dab Kester, you know well 'nough what I mean. I ax you who got up bogus tituls fur a hun'erd thousan' acres o' lan' which the same The'dore Brown went off up No'th an' sold fur ten cents a acre; an' you an' him both a-knowin' thar wan't a foot o' vacan' lan' on Cum'erlan' Mounting, nur hain't been fur more'n forty year?"

"But ef the State grants them tituls——"

"Don't talk to me 'bout no State—the State ar' like Julian Scott's turnpike, hain't got no soul, which the same I reckon ar' a plumb lucky thing fur the State, ef hit 'tend to keep on a-pilin' lan' tituls top o' one 'nother, tell they're knee deep all over this mounting. I don't know why sich a thing ar' 'lowed to go on, but I tell you pint'dly, Dab Kester, 'at whos'ever dabbles in sich bizziness is a sowin' sorrer, an' they're a-gwyin' to reap a mighty big crap o' tribulation.

"'N who laid off yander ole pine fiel' what you coaxed me into signin' a deed fur, into town lots, an' then norated in ev'ry newspaper in the lan' 'at you'd give 'way a lot to ev'ry fool 'at ud sen' two dollars to pay fur the deed, an' so forth, sarchin' the titul an' so forth? Givin' 'way lots fur two dollars, an' you couldn't sell the lan' fur two bits a acre in a lump, an' you know hit, Dab Kester, an' still you call yourse'f a honest man.

"I don't like that The'dore Brown, nur hain't, never sence he come down here fum Cincinnatty an' got 'round you 'ith that limber tongue o' his'n, an' he's a-gwyin' to be the ruination o' you ef you don't quit a-consortin' 'long o' him."

"But 'Riar, I——"

"Thes wait! I got nothin' to say 'bout your idee o' makin' a match between The'dore Brown an' Linda, 'cause Linda's a gal cap'bul o' takin' keer o' herse'f, an' she'll do hit—but what I want to say ar' that nex' Thursday ar' the 'lection, an' I want to know whuther

you gwyin' be a hones' law-abidin' citerzen, ur whuther you got fixed up a game o' whuppin' 'er devil 'round 'er stump?"

"'N cou'se I'm a-gwyin' to ac' far' an' hones', an' I don't know nothin' 'bout no games."

"Ye needn't put on no look o' innercence, Dab Kester, kase ye know well 'nough what I mean—I thes like to know what's in that kag I see you an' Gabe Huck'by a-hidin' las' night so keerful in the pine thicket yander?"

She paused, but there was no answer.

"Ye don't answer, Dab Kester, an' well ye may keep still. Ye're bent on havin' Gabe Huck'by re-lected sher'ff, so's you c'n use 'im, an' borry the county money fum 'im; an' ye don't like Dave Hatfiel'; which thar hain't a more promisin' young man in the county, an' one 'at ort to be 'ncouraged; 'n 'cordin' to my guess he gwyin' be the nex' sher'ff."

This reached his bump of pugnacity, and he promptly responded:

"I bet you twenty-five dollars Gabe Huck'by's the nex' sher'ff o' this county, 'n I bet you fifty dollars Dave Hatfiel' hain t."

He took as he spoke a large roll of bills from his pocket and shook them defiantly.

"I wouldn't tech yer money 'ith a poker. Hit's blood money. Hit's the price The'dore Brown's a-payin' you fur the use of you, body 'n soul; hit's the price o' yer good name 'n reputation." She turned as if to go; then paused a minute:

"O Dab! Mindab!" and all the reproof and denunciation were gone from her voice, and instead, he caught the ring of an accent, sweet from its rarity and from its association in memory with the years long gone. "To think o' all we've gone thew together—to think o' the troubles we've met a-standin' side 'n side —to think o' the three little graves 'at we made down yander when we's young, an' I've tended, endurin' all these years—'n then to think o' what's been a-growin' in my min' durin' the whole year, 'bout my own husban'—hit all makes me wusht I's a-lyin' down yander too, 'long 'ith the three little ones."

CHAPTER II.

If there was an individual in all the world whom Dab Kester hated, that individual was Dave Hatfield.

Dave was a fearless, stalwart young lowlander, with a long head, a limber tongue, as mattering of the law, unlimited powers of invective, sarcasm, and ridicule.

Two years before he had appeared as counsel against Mindab in a lawsuit before a justice, in which was involved the title to a yoke of muley steers, an antiquated spavined horse, and a herd of razor-back half-wild hogs.

Mindab had acted as his own lawyer in the matter, and in the light of some of the evidence, had not felt particularly proud of his client; but when counsel for the other party got through with him, he felt as though he were flayed alive.

And then to think that the impudent young fellow should afterward try to "keep company" with Linda. And Linda had not only tolerated, but had actually encouraged him. In the very supremacy of his wrath he had gone before a magistrate and made solemn affidavit in writing that he would disown chick or child of his who should ever form an alliance with any member of the hated Hatfield tribe.

And next Thursday was the election, and his own wife and daughter were friends and well-wishers to the hated upstart.

The memory of that merciless tongue-lashing swept over him, sitting there in the summer Sabbath morning, and carried with it all trace of the tenderness evoked by his wife's final grief-laden words.

"Ort to be 'ncouraged!" he ejaculated, long after his wife and daughter had gone off to attend the ministrations of Eli Stocksberry. "I'll 'ncourage 'im! I'll larn 'm to talk 'bout me. Purty sher'ff he'd make, now I bet you. Couldn't tell a 'plevin writ fum a supeeny-haby-co'pus. I wouldn't be afeared to bet airy hun'erd acres I got on this mounting. The idee o' Dave Hatfiel' bein' 'lected 'n me agin' 'im. Gabe Huck'by gwyin' be 'lected by five hundred m'jority. Hadn't a-been for that fool legislatur passin' that law 'bout 'toxicatin' lickers, he'd a-been a thousan'."

He took down from a rude shelf on the wall a copy of the latest "Acts," and laboriously read the obnoxious statute.

"The biggest pack o' eejiots 'at ever I see. Thar it reads 's big 's life: 'Whos'ever shall sell or give 'way any 'toxicatin' lickers at or near a 'lection ground, shall be fined,' an' so forth. I pint'dly b'leves hit ar' uncons'tutional, 'n I mean to write to Judge Jeems Rand'off 'n git 'is 'pinion."

He shut the book with a bang, and relit his long-extinct pipe.

"'At's all right," he continued after a moment's rumination. "Gabe Huck'by's frien's ain't gwyin' nuther sell nur give 'way, but ef they should happen to fin' a twenty-gallon kag o' the real ginnywine, un'dulterated stuff out in yander pine thicket, an sh'd thes he'p tharse'ves, without sayin' nothin' to nobody, what the law gwyn' to do 'bout hit?

"Hit moughtn't make so much diffunce in some o' the precinc's, whuther they don't have no licker or not —'ceptin' hit's human natur to want what ye can't git —but the very ijeear o' a 'lection in the Brimstone Deestric', an' the Head o' Smoky, an' the Widder Bartleham's, an' no licker to be had fur love nur money; why, sir, ef hit git norated about 'at thar hain't gwyin' be no licker put up by nobody, thar won't be enough o' the ole groun' hogs come out'n thar holes to open ther polls. Hit all depend on them three deestric's, an' they got ter be tended to. That thar Dave Hatfield's got sich a way, 'n sich a limber double-jinted tongue, an' that thar Gabe's sich a ornary fool."

When the morning of the election came the three doubtful districts had been "fixed" in a way that boded no good for the Hatfield ticket.

Mindab sat upon his front porch smoking his pipe and giving noisy greeting to the natives, as they straggled into town by ones and twos, on horseback or afoot.

A rider laboring slowly up from the valley threw rein over the gate-post and saluted the smoker.

"Howdy, Dab."

"Howdy, Josh."

The new-comer was a brother of the landlord, and

after meditating a moment upon the invitation to "light," climbed slowly down, pulled after him a pair of rusty saddle-bags, and joined his relative on the porch.

"How the 'lection gwyin'?" queried Mindab. "Who gwyin' be 'lected sher'ff?"

"I do' know, sca'cely," answered the other, "but hit 'pears to me 'at that race are considerable mixed. Week ago, I been a bettin' man, which I ain't, I'd a-bet fifty dollars on Gabe Huck'by; but ter-day ef I's a bettin' man, which I ain't noways, I'd bet a hundred 'at Dave Hatfiel' gwyin' wax it onto him."

"Wax nuthin'!" exclaimed the other. "Thar's whar you done gone a-miscalculatin' what's a gwyin to happen ter-day, 's shore 's my name's Dab Kester, which the same I wouldn't be 'feared to bet any 'mount o' land or any quantity o' money."

"W-a-l-l," answered the other, as he spat at an adventurous chicken that came into range, "as I thes said, I ain't no bettin' character, 'n I spects to vote fur Gabe m'se'f, an' 'ud like to see 'im 'lected; but then votin' is votin', and bettin' is bettin'; and ef I's that sort of character, which I noways ain't, I wouldn't be 'feared to resk a hun'erd dollars o' money or a hun'erd acres o' lan', thes whichever you mought say."

"I thes got a hun'erd dollars right here," said Mindab, slapping his pocket, "'at says right out loud 'at Gabe Huck'by gwyin' be the next sher'ff o' this county."

"I ain't no bettin' character, as I thes said, and a hun'erd dollars are a good 'eal o' money; speshul bettin' jedgment again a pusson's wishes. 'S I thes said I spects to vote fur Gabe——"

"I bet a hun'erd again fifty," taunted the other.

"'S I thes said-——"

"I bet a hun'erd again twenty-five!"

Josh slowly drew out a greasy wallet, took thence two or three bills, fished out some pieces of silver, and finally said:

"Done. I don't want to bet agin my own cannydate, but I don't 'low no hun'erd dollars to come a-beggin' of me to be took'n in out of the wet. Whar's yer stakeholder?"

From the half-dozen or more voters, who by this time had straggled into the porch, a custodian was quickly selected and the money passed over.

This preliminary skirmish was but the beginning of a wordy warfare which continued until almost high noon. By that time, diverse "tracks" of land, various sums of money, a batch of county warrants, a rifle, and a yoke of steers had been severally wagered by the contending parties.

Real estate being involved, Mindab insisted that a short writing should be drawn to make the bets binding; and this document he compassed at the expense of much grimacing, tongue-chewing, and an hour's time.

When Josh came to sign, he scrawled a supplementary clause at the bottom, setting forth that he transferred any winnings that might accrue to him to Linda Kester.

"I don't want yer truck, Mindab," he explained, "and hit'll come in right handy fur the gal when she sets up fur herse'f. And now I'm a-gwyin' out an' roll up fifty votes fur the young feller 'at's a-gwyin' to help her in the settin' up."

"Is the man a plumb fool?" growled Mindab as the other went off chuckling.

When at last he found opportunity to visit the polling-place, and inquired from one of his henchmen how the battle progressed, he was surprised to find that two-thirds of the voters of the precinct had cast their ballots, and many of them had gone home.

"Whar all the Shumake tribe?" he asked.

"Every son of a gun of 'em done voted an' gone home," answered the other.

"Whar Tom Leatherberry?"

"Been down yander at the blacksmith shop fur the last two hour a-swappin' hosses 'long 'ith ole man Grinder—or leastways a-tryin' to, but in cou'se that ar hoss o' his'n ar' moon-eyed——"

"A-swappin' o' hosses 'lection day, an' him a-wantin' to be debity onderneath Gabe Huck'by!" almost screamed Mindab. "Whar Sol Bartleham?"

"That thar Sol ar' been a-wuckin' like a brinnel dog a-gnawin' a root. He thes been a-projectin'

round 'tween the cou't house, whar the votin' ar' gwyin' on, an' the aige o' the pine thicket yander, all the whole endurin' mawnin' like—thes 's bizzy 's a hen 'ith one chicken. Fust a passel of 'em projec' an' santer 'round like to the aige o' the pine bresh; then all at onct you see 'em make a break fur them polls, 'bout a dozen at onct; some a sort o' grinnin' like, an' some a sort o' sniggerin' like, an' some a-lookin' mad an' a-cussin'."

"Gone home; swappin' hosses; and so forth, and so forth," commented the other, after ruminating a moment on this unwonted state of affairs. "Well, I dunno 's ye c'd expect any diff'rent arter sich a fool law."

CHAPTER III.

When the votes of the Possumwalk District were counted out, the Huckeby contingent were amazed to find that Dave Hatfield's majority for sheriff was a clean hundred.

The legal embargo on liquid refreshments having been lifted at sunset, the crowd gathered at the Shockly House to wait, with such patience as they might, for the returns from the various other precincts of the county.

About eleven o'clock Tom Leatherberry, who was the village postmaster, as well as one of Mindab's right-hand "strikers," joined the noisy group, and presently plucked the landlord to one side.

They went out, and Tom led the way across the sandy common and into the thick brush beyond, where, plucking away some loosely thrown branches, he disclosed the half-defined outlines of a cask.

"I like to ax, Mindab, ef you know anything o' that ar'?"

"An' I like to ax, Tom Leatherberry, whuther you're agin me or fur me in this 'ere succumstance?"

"That's nuther here nor thar. Hows'ever, I don't want to know too much, 'count o' the gran' jury. S'pose ye jest give that bar'l a shake, Dab Kester."

The latter complied, gingerly.

"Shake! You needn't be 'feared—'twon't go off even ef 'tis loaded."

"The durned thing ar' nearly plumb full," said Mindab in a tone of surprise.

"Exac'ly! S'pose ye jest smell in the bung-hole, Mindab."

He gave a prolonged sniff.

"S'pose ye jest take a leetle ho'n out'n thar," said Tom. "Thar's a gou'd underneath."

"But, Tom, in cou'se I don't want to be pizened. How'd I know what some pusson onbeknownst mought done gone put in that bar'l?"

"'Tain't pizen, Mindab, ur ef hit ar' thar ar' more'n a hun'erd men in Uchee County 'at'll be deader 'n a door-nail 'fore mawnin', which the same I'll be one on 'em m'self."

The other found the spigot, and pouring out a small portion, tasted cautiously.

"Faugh! soapsuds, by the great hokey!"

"That's thes what hit ar', Mindab."

A great light began to dawn on Kester's befuddled understanding.

"But, Tom, how come it?" he asked after cogitating a moment.

"Don't ax me how come it. I don't know nothin'."

More cogitation.

"But, Tom, whyn't you pour them durned suds out?"

"Mindab, the show war purty well over when I got into the circus. Nearly ever' one o' them fellers had sampled that bar'l 'fore I foun' out thar war anything wrong. I didn't want to 'pear too familyer 'ith a game o' whuppin' the devil 'round a stump, any more 'n you did. You know well 'nough the gran' jury gwyin' be pokin' thar noses into a thing o' that sort—that is, a-suppos'n' thar had a-been licker in thar."

"I thes like to hold a 'sperunce meetin' 'ith the onmitigated cuss 'at went a-jugglin' 'ith that bar'l," said Mindab. "Tom, who'd you s'pose done hit?"

"Don't ax me who done hit. I s'pose no s'poses an' I calls no names. But I will say one thing, Mindab, seein' you an' me 's ole frien's like, an' that ar' 'at ef I's a cannydate fur any offus in this county, I'd 'long sight ruther have that good-lookin' gal an' that long-headed ole ooman o' your'n fur me as to have 'em agin me. 'Twan't no acciden' them soapsuds

a-comin' into that bar'l, nuther wus hit a acciden' Josh a-comin' 'long this mawnin' loaded an' cocked an' primed fur half a dozen bets agin the cannydate he's thes a-honin' to vote fur; an' a-keepin' you pow-wowin' all the endurin' mawnin' whiles ever'body 's a-votin' fur Dave Hatfiel' arter just comin' out here an' gittin' a tas' o' Gabe Huck'by's treat. I tell you pint'dly, Mindab, them two's a team, an' hit's my privut 'pinion they wan't fur Gabe Huck'by in this 'lection.

"But, Mindab, 'at ain't all I's a-wantin' to say to you. Seein' you got a smart passel bet on this 'ere 'lection, I didn't know but you mought fix things up, 'long o' Josh, ef you knowed pint'dly how things done gone to-day. Mindab, you know Dave Hatfiel' 's 'lected sher'ff world 'ithout eend?"

"N-a-w-w, I don't know nothin'. Thes you wait tell you hear fum Smoky——"

"Dab Kester, I have heard fum Smoky, an' Brimstone, an' Bartleham's; an' I tell you the jig ar' up, the soap ar' weighed, an' the fat ar' in the fire. Tand Bolton done come in fum thar about a hour ago—come across the short way by Poplar Mounting, an' he fotch the word 'at Dave Hatfiel' carry them three deestric's world 'ithout eend.

"The game didn't work thar no more nor hit did here. In Smoky Deestric' a bar'l war diskivered close to them polls, but hit war foun' empty 's a gou'd. Somebody had done snuck up an' bored a sugar hole in hit. Thar war a pow'rful smell thar, but that ruther made matters wus. You don't want to smell no empty bar'l when you's dry an' thusty like.

"In Brimstone Deestric' thar war foun' a bar'l full o' crick warter—thes think o' that, Dab Kester—*warter* fur the voters o' Brimstone; an' Ike Cunoot stood thar in front o' the circus, a-yellin', 'This way, gentlemen, fur Gabe Huck'by's treat! Hyar yer are, drinks fur the crowd!' An' thar them ole groun'-hogs march up an' git one tas' o' that crick warter, an' then march off 'n vote fur Dave Hatfiel'. In Bartleham's they didn't turn out mor'n a dozen or two, an' Dave Hatfiel' got most o' them. All o' which Tand Bolton done told me, over 't my house, whar he's a-stoppin' ontil mawnin' like. You like to see 'im, we c'n thes step over thar."

They picked their way out of the brush—out across the common again—past the deserted and silent court-house, and on toward Leatherberry's residence, situated at the far edge of the town.

They had traversed half the length of the street, when Tom suddenly stopped before a house in which still shone a light, although the hour was late, and most of the inhabitants, aside from the group at the Shockly House, had retired.

"Mindab, whar that gal o' yourn?"

"What you mean, Tom Leatherberry? Why you ax 'bout Linda?"

"Mindab, I do' know what I mean, nur why I ax sich a queschun. Hit thes come over me like a streak o' lightnin' when I see them lights in thar. Thar's somethin' a-goin' on in thar, thes shore's you bawn."

Through the half-drawn blinds they caught a glimpse of people moving about, and through the door came the low buzz of mingling voices.

Silently the two men pushed open the gate and moved up to the doorstep, and this is what they saw:

Eli Stooksberry standing in the full blaze of the light, while before him stood Dave Hatfield and Linda Kester, with their right hands joined, and the preacher was just uttering the final fateful words, "I pronounce you man and wife, and what God has joined together let no man put asunder."

For one awful moment, it seemed to Kester as if the end of the world had come; then, with a frenzied sweep of his long arms, he sprang into the very midst, hoarsely exclaiming:

"I ferbid them perceedin's! I ferbid them perceedin's!"

He flashed a glittering knife in the lamplight, and made as if about to spring upon the stalwart groom; a pistol clicked, and brawny arms were outstretched to seize the raving mountaineer, but Hatfield waved them back.

"Don't touch him, boys! Let him strike, if he can!"

For a moment, the pair confronted each other; the form of the wrathful father, towering to the full measure of his six feet three inches—the knife was half-raised, the fierce gray eyes flashed fire.

Of almost equal inches stood the groom. Abating no jot or tittle before that fierce gaze and aggressive attitude, a smile played over his handsome face—a smile of contented possession, but showing nothing of exultation or defiance.

From the stern face of the angry father his glance dropped to the one pressing closer to his arm, and the smile became one of supreme tenderness. The father's eye followed that look, and the grim lines of his face visibly relaxed. The knife dropped by his side and the flashing eyes were veiled in sudden mist.

His girl had never seemed so beautiful as in that supreme moment; standing with her hands clasping the arm of her newly-made husband, her lips half-parted in eager entreaty.

"Now, Daddy Dab," said the voice he loved so well.

Her words and the touch of her hand, laid so beseechingly upon his arm, banished all resentment, and instead there seemed, when he spoke, the hopeless grief of one who looks upon his dead.

"Hit 'pears mighty hard, Linda, gal—hit 'pears mighty hard, my frien's," looking slowly around at the assembly, "to have hit all eend this a-way. I s'pose hit ar' nacher'l, a-gittin' marr'd an' a-givin' in marriage, an' I do' know 's I c'd fin' hit in my heart to blame 'er fur makin' 'er own ch'ice—but a goin' so ag'in my wishes, I don't think it ud a-hurt me any wusser to see 'er nailed up in 'er coffin an' laid down yander in the valley 'long 'ith the little ones 'at's took when they's babies."

He turned to go, but she clung to his arm.

"Daddy Dab, won't you speak to my—to Dave?"

He looked down at her, then up at the stalwart young fellow standing by. Again the two men looked for a moment into each other's eyes. Slowly the elder extended his hand and laid it in the cordial grasp of the other.

"I've hated you an' fit you my level best, Dave, an' I own up 'at you've beat me fa'r; you've won the 'lection, 'an I b'lieve you'll make a good sher'ff, but I'm not a-gwine to be here to see hit. You've got my gal, Dave—they don't—don't nobody—on—the yeath know what she's been to me—not—not even herself."

He broke down and covered his tear-filled eyes with his disengaged hand. After a moment he continued:

"I b'lieve ye'll make 'er a good husban', Dave—I charge ye to do that, Dave, here in the presence of these that's both our frien's. I lay that charge on ye, Dave, before—before—the good Lord above us, who, the good Book says, takes notice of even sich missuble sinners as me when they cry to him. An', Dave," with sudden change of tone and withdrawing his hand, "ef ever ye lay the weight o' yer little finger on my gal, 'cept in lovin' kindness, I'll ha'nt ye ef I'm dead an' I'll shoot ye ef I'm livin'."

Without another word, he turned and followed Leatherberry into the night.

But the fates had yet another blow in store for him.

Arrived at his friend's house, which was also the post-office, he was given a letter, arrived in that afternoon's mail.

"Hit ar' fum The'dore Brown," he explained, as he saw the address. "Nothin' would do 'im but he must break off to Nashville Monday, an' him a-knowin' the 'lection war right on hand."

This is what he read:

"By-by, Dabster, I'm off. I take along the money we've had in bank here, because I think you've always felt it wasn't made exactly on the square. I didn't want to leave till I got through selling the lots the second time, but there will be a government official up there, probably, by the time this gets to you, looking for a couple of parties who are charged with using the mail for fraudulent purposes. I shall be sorry if you get into any trouble—that is, if I ever hear of it, for your respectable position in the community has been of great use to me in floating my little schemes.

"Yours in haste,

"T. BROWN."

And now, surely, the end of the world had come. The election gone wrong—his daughter married to his one enemy—good name and self-respect bartered for money, and the paltry money stolen.

An hour later the silver moon, swinging down the west, saw a figure ride silently away in the chill night. Down the mountain, and on through the misty valley, heavily cloaked, and with broad slouch hat drawn

low over a face that had aged ten years in a single night.

Four years later an old man, looking like a tramp, toiled slowly up the mountain and stopped before the old swinging sign. He was travel-worn, and bent, and gray-haired.

Baring his head to the sweet south wind, he looked about with an interest that contrasted sharply with his forlorn and fatigued appearance. With one swift glance he surveyed the house and the straggling village, then turned about and gazed long and hungrily upon the wide-reaching landscape below.

A little child playing about the doorsteps caught sight of the figure standing so silently before the open gate, and came toward him with faltering steps and baby talk. For one moment the old man looked at the little one, and then stooping, laid his rough cheek, wet with sudden tears, against the child's upturned wondering face.

And so the two women found them a little later.

"Oo c'yin'," said the baby.

"Why, Daddy Dab!" and "Why, Mindab!" said wife and daughter in a breath.

And then they had him into the house—not with kisses and caresses, for that was not their way—but with loving hearts and gentle hands, and shining eyes, and pitiful words for his forlorn condition.

This realistic story of a strange duel was written for ROMANCE by Enrique H. Lewis.

TOLD BY A DEAD MAN.

ONE evening, not many months ago, three persons were seated in a snug corner of the lounging-room of the Electricians' Club of Vienna. From the intent and eager expression on the faces of two of them, it was evident that the subject of the conversation was more than ordinarily interesting.

The leader of the conversation was a man apparently on the turn of thirty-five, with a face strongly marked by the unsparing brush of late hours and unrestrained passions. He had reached the pith of the tale and was enjoying the impatience of his listeners with a keen relish. At last, yielding to their eager importunities he said:

"Well, I'll tell you the name of the lady, but remember you have given your word of honor that it shall go no further. When I followed her from the train I found it was—O shades of virtue! Mrs. Waldemer."

"You lie!"

The words rang through the silent room like a trumpet blast. Springing to their feet with a haste that sent chairs and table flying, the startled trio turned and saw a gentleman in evening dress standing not three feet away. His face was convulsed with rage, and his futile struggle for speech only caused his pallid lips to utter incoherent sounds. For a few seconds no one moved, and the ominous quiet was only broken by the deep, labored breathing of him who had so unceremoniously interrupted the peace of the night; then with a sudden bound a form cleared the intervening space, and before hand could be raised in hindrance, the boastful roué had planted a terrific blow full in the face of his adversary, almost felling him to the floor. The infuriated combatants were quickly separated by the excited bystanders, and both hurried from the house.

On the following morning the frequenters of the club stood about in little knots discussing the episode of the night before. There was a universal sympathy with the gentleman who had received the blow, and many strong expressions of anger were indulged in by the members, who were justly enraged at the publicity that would inevitably follow such a disgraceful affair.

One old gentleman in particular was much excited. He said:

"Such an unwarranted imputation against a lady's character should not pass unpunished; and if Herr Waldemer does not challenge that brute, why, I'll do it myself, if only on general principles."

As the choleric old man finished, a commotion at the door showed the entrance of some one with fresh news on the engrossing topic.

The new-comer was quickly surrounded, and with the eagerness of a bearer of glad tidings he exclaimed:

"Waldemer has challenged him, and the challenge is accepted of course. I have just come from the house of Rukert, who, you know, conducts all such affairs. He wouldn't tell me when it was to take place, or indeed anything at all about it. But there are going to be some extraordinary arrangements; I could tell that by his air of mystery—the pompous old idiot!"

The welcome intelligence created a feeling of general relief among the members, and it was hailed with great satisfaction. They dispersed to their various homes, knowing that their code of honor was still intact.

For several days the curious made every effort to discover any details concerning the impending duel, but without avail. There was only a certainty that it would take place, but where and how was only known to the principals and the indefatigable Rukert.

On the morning of the sixth day after the quarrel at the club, the community was thrown into a state of horror at the following article published in the *Neue Freie Presse:*

At half-past eight last night, as a party of young men were passing the house of Herr Waldemer, in Strasse Wallfischgasse, they were startled by the loud report of a revolver coming from the direction of that gentle-

man's residence, followed immediately by an agonizing scream. They hastily forced the front door and, after a vain search in several rooms, all untenanted, they reached the study. There prostrate on the floor was the form of our well-known citizen—dead. A hideous wound in his left temple and a revolver lying near at hand showed the cause of death. Stretched across his body, her hair dabbling in a pool of blood, was his beautiful wife. It was at first thought that she also was dead. But a hasty examination showed that she had only fainted.

One of the horrified gentlemen ran for the nearest doctor, and also to report the melancholy news to the proper authorities. The others set to work to revive Mrs. Waldemer, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing her recover consciousness.

By a fortunate coincidence Dr. Breslon happened to be in the neighborhood, and he was soon in attendance. He pronounced Waldemer past all medical aid, but said that the lady was only suffering from a severe nervous shock, natural under the circumstances.

Despite her protestations Mrs. Waldemer was taken into custody and removed to the house of detention, where she remained during the night, all offers of bail being resolutely refused.

Owing to a most extraordinary and fortunate circumstance we are enabled to clear the unhappy lady from all suspicion, and also to give our readers the details of a very singular duel that took place in this city but a few days ago, and which undoubtedly caused the suicide just mentioned.

Last night at half-past ten o'clock a messenger left a package in the anteroom with instructions that it be sent up to the managing editor. Upon the removal of the outer wrapper was found a sealed envelope with the following note:

"June 13th, 1889.

"To the Managing Editor:

"You will find inclosed an important item of news, which you are at liberty to use, only on condition that this envelope be not received before ten o'cock this night. I trust to your well-known honor to see that this stipulation is faithfully carried out.

"Rudolph Waldemer."

Long before the receipt of the mysterious package Waldemer's suicide had been discovered, and so the seal was immediately broken. Inside was the following remarkable confession:

"These my last words are written on the threshold of the unknown. Though in the prime of life, the mere thought of living has become a dread more terrifying than that of death.

"It is still fresh in the mind public how I overheard in my club the name of my wife bandied about by a lecherous scoundrel, who has already gone the road I shall travel to-night.

"I challenged him. The challenge was accepted. All the details were left to a mutual friend—a man learned in electrical science—who enthusiastically proposed the adoption of electricity as a weapon. I assented with indifference, not heeding the agent, so that I had my revenge. My antagonist agreed, prompted by a professional curiosity. For several days the mysterious preparations went on, and at last there came a note stating that I was to call at a certain house on the outskirts of the city at midnight.

"On arrival at the place indicated the scientist met me at the door and led the way to a little anteroom on the second floor. There I found my antagonist, and it was only the knowledge that but a few minutes could elapse before we would be engaged in mortal combat that restrained me from throttling him where he stood.

"We were taken into an adjoining room, and what I saw there filled my soul with a grim joy—the lust for murder. Returning again to the outer room, we were requested to submit without demur to any preparations necessary. I complied with alacrity, but he evidently hesitated before answering, and I noticed with pleasure that his voice trembled and his face paled with a cowardly dread.

"The old electrician produced two long, close-fitting robes that enveloped us from neck to heels, and with skilful fingers he speedily buttoned them around us, making the shroud-like garments more secure by passing a stout cord about the outside in innumerable

turns. Fettered in this way we lay upon the floor, unable to move hand or foot. Satisfied at last that the fastenings were secure, he dragged us with infinite care into the chamber of death.

"It was a small square room devoid of furniture and but dimly lighted by a common oil lamp suspended from the ceiling. The floor had been waxed and polished until it was as smooth as glass. In two corners of the room, diagonally opposite each other, were a couple of peculiar-looking metal discs placed horizontally on the floor, and having a round flat knob in the centre. Leading from each were two lines of insulated wire about six or seven yards long, ending in shallow cups containing dampened felt.

"Placing us side by side, midway between the corners, the cups were fastened to our bodies, one being placed on the neck at the base of the brain and the other at the extremity of the spinal column. Thus attached to our respective discs, we were told that he who first reached his opponent's corner could, by merely placing his head on the elevated spot, send the annihilating current on its deadly way.

"The old scientist, after a few hurried directions, given in a voice agitated with strong emotion, retired to a corner, where I could see him standing in an attitude of rapt attention, his head bent forward, his eyes protruding and glowering with a fixity of expression almost maniacal in its intensity.

"The room was filled with a solemn quiet, unbroken save by the low murmur of heavy respiration or the regular tick of a clock, whose monotonous rhythm sounded like the beat of a drum to my overstrained nerves. Thus we lay for nearly half a minute, each waiting for the other to make the move.

"A short reflection had shown me that victory would come to him who showed the greatest cunning, as the manner in which we were tied precluded the display of brute force, and the slippery floor offered no fulcrum wherewith to propel one's self along.

"Slyly I turned my head and saw, close by, the livid face of my antagonist, his deep-set eyes watchful and alert.

"As a feint I turned slowly over. He did the same.

Then with a sudden effort I swung around so that my feet struck him a sharp blow in the face. It aroused all the devil in his nature, and he quickly retaliated by making a desperate lunge at my head; his heels flew past within an inch, and the force of the movement placed him almost between me and my corner. He was quick to see the advantage, and started to roll with increasing force in that direction. Then ensued a terrible race for the disc.

"Over the glassy floor, slipping and sliding, with head advanced in futile endeavor to gain a greater momentum, we writhed and squirmed, vainly grasping at the polished surface.

"The room revolved in a dizzy whirl, and soon my eyes were blinded by aching tears called forth by a raging terror at the heart—a fear that he might gain the victory and live. With one last almost superhuman effort I threw myself across the widening gap between us and stopped his progress. There we lay panting for breath on the very edge of the metal plate, but I was nearest.

"After what seemed an eternity of time the strange combat recommenced. I was posted in the angle, my feet pressed firmly against one wall and my head against the other. It was a living barrier of resistless strength.

"Suddenly I felt his form against mine, creeping cunningly closer. With a hasty jerk I drew my body in, and with shoulders pressed firmly against the plastered sides gave one powerful kick and sent him sliding to the centre of the room. Before he had stopped I was rolling in the direction of his corner.

"With elbow and heel, invoking the aid of every nerve and muscle, I rapidly covered the intervening space, and then found my passage barred and the goal snatched from my eager grasp on the threshold of victory. Wild with baffled rage I threw myself upon him, and with hellish fury tried to tear his throat with my teeth.

"As we struggled the room resounded with an infernal din of gasping moans and oaths strangled in their utterance. For a time I lost all sense of direction and was only intent on crushing out his viperous life.

"We had neared the middle when, by what crafty trick

I know not, he broke away, and with miraculous speed, now leaping half-erect and now writhing like a serpent, he again approached the disc. I watched him with fascinated eye as he drew nearer and nearer. My tongue clove to the roof of my mouth, every drop of blood turned to ice, and I felt the bony hand of death clutching that heart which in a second would shrivel at the lightning's touch.

"He reached it; up went his head, higher and higher. My God! why does he prolong this living death? A thud as it touched the iron plate; a horrible gurgling noise cut off in its infancy; one long convulsive shudder of the body, and he lay dead before me, killed by his own wire. *He had mistaken the p ate!*

"Hours afterward I was carried from the house, my reason almost gone and the dread terror of the scene still before me. How his body was disposed of I do not know. Probably it was buried under a false name. His death was not at my hands, but the horror of it rests upon me and it is more than I can bear."

The story is a strange one, but it must be true, for it is vouched for by two people who were on the ground.

THE THIRD MAID.

It was on a wild October evening about a year ago that my wife and I arrived by train at a well-known watering-place in the north of England. The wind was howling and roaring with delight at its resistless power; the rain came hissing down in large drops.

Our hotel was situated on an eminence overlooking the town, and as we slowly ascended to it in our cab, we thought, "Well, we must not be surprised to find that our intended abode for the night has vanished."

However, we presently stopped in front of a building which looked substantial enough to withstand anything, and in answer to our driver's ring the door was promptly opened by a smartly-attired porter. He was closely followed by a person full of smiles and bows, who posted himself in the doorway ready to receive us.

All at once there was a terrific bang, as though a forty-pounder had been fired to welcome our arrival and he of the smiles and bows was hurled headlong against the muddy wheel of our conveyance by the slamming to of the large door. My wife's bonnet blew off and tugged hard at its moorings; the light in the porch was extinguished, while the wind seemed to give a shriek of triumph at the jokes he was playing upon us. Here we were, then, in total darkness and exposed to the drenching rain. However, half an hour afterward all our discomforts were forgotten as we sat down to an excellent dinner.

Next morning I was abroad very early, looking for lodgings. Fortune seemed to smile upon me on this occasion, for scarcely had I proceeded fifty yards from my hotel when I came upon a very nice-looking row of houses, and in the window of the first was "Lodgings to Let." Knocking at the door, it was soon opened by a very neat-looking maid.

I inquired if I could see the proprietor, but was told that Miss G—— was not yet down. I said I would

wait, and was shown into a very comfortably-furnished dining-room. Soon Miss G—— appeared, and proved to be a very pretty brunette of about twenty-five, whose dark eyes during our short interview were every now and then fixed on me with an intentness that seemed to be trying to read what kind of a person I was; while her manner, though decidedly pleasing, had a certain restlessness in it which I could not help observing. Her father and mother being both dead, she kept the lodging-house herself. I asked her if she had a good cook, to which she replied she herself was responsible for most of the cooking, keeping two maids to assist in the house and parlor work. She went on to say that her drawing-room was "dissected;" a term common among north country lodging-house keepers, and meant to express that it was undergoing its autumn cleaning, but she would have it put straight if I wished. I told her that we should be quite contented with the dining-room, provided we had a good bedroom. This she at once showed me, and soon coming to terms, I returned to the hotel.

After breakfast I went to the desk to ask for my account. While it was being made out, I observed casually that I had taken lodgings at Miss G——'s, on Cliff Terrace, upon which the accountant looked quickly up and said: "Oh, Miss G——'s," and then as quickly went on with my bill. I hardly noticed this at the moment, though I thought of it afterward.

Eleven o'clock saw us comfortably settled in our rooms. After lunch we took a delightful walk, the weather having greatly moderated. We found that night, at dinner, that Miss G—— was a first-rate cook, and we retired to rest much pleased with our quarters.

We soon made the acquaintance of the two maids—Jane, who waited on us, and Mary, the housemaid; and two very pleasant and obliging young women we found them.

About the third morning of our stay, on going to my bedroom after breakfast, I was surprised to find a strange maid in the room. She was standing by the bed, smoothing down the bedclothes with both hands, and appeared to take no notice of me, but continued gazing steadily in front of her, while her hands went

mechanically on smoothing the clothes. I could not help being struck with her pale face, which wore a look of pain, and the fixed and almost stony expression of her eyes. I left her in exactly the same position as I found her. On coming down I said to my wife: "I did not know Miss G—— employed three servants. There certainly is another making the bed in our room." I am short-sighted, and my wife would have it that I had made a mistake, but I felt quite certain I had not. Later on, while Jane was setting the table for lunch, I said to her: "I thought that you and Mary were the only two servants in the house."

"Yes, sir; only me and Mary," was Jane's reply as she left the room.

"There," said my wife; "I told you that you were mistaken." And I did not pursue the subject further.

Two or three days slipped away in pleasant occupations, such as driving, boating, etc., and we had forgotten all about the third maid. We saw but little of Miss G——, though her handiwork was pleasantly apparent in the cuisine.

On the sixth morning of our stay, which was the day before we were to leave, my wife after breakfast said she would go up and do a little packing while I made out our route for the following day in the Bradshaw. I was soon interrupted by the return of my wife with a rather scared look on her face.

"Well," she said, "you were right after all, for there is another maid, and she is now in our bedroom, and apparently engaged in much the same occupation as when you saw her there. She took no notice of me, but stood there with her body slightly bent over the bed, looking straight in front of her, her hands smoothing the bedclothes." She described her as having dark hair, her face very pale, and her mouth very firmly set. My curiosity was now so much awakened that I determined to question Miss G—— on the subject. But our carriage was at the door waiting for us to start on an expedition that would engage us all day.

On my return, late in the afternoon, meeting Miss G—— in the passage, I said to her, "Who is the third servant that Mrs. K—— and myself have seen once or twice in our bedroom?"

Miss G—— looked, I thought, rather scared, and murmuring something that I could not catch, turned and went hurriedly down the stairs into the kitchen.

An hour afterward, as we were sitting waiting for our dinner, Jane brought a note from Miss G—— inclosing her account, and saying that she had just had a telegram summoning her to the sick-bed of a relative, that in all probability she would not be back till after our departure, but that she had left directions with the servants, and hoped they would make us quite comfortable, and that we would excuse her hurried departure.

A few minutes after a cab drove up to the door, into which, from our window, we saw Miss G—— get and drive rapidly away.

Later on in the evening, while Jane was clearing away the dinner things, I said to her, "By-the-by, Jane, who is the third maid?" She was just going to leave the room as I spoke. Instead of replying she turned round with such a scared look on her face that I felt quite alarmed; then, hurriedly catching up her tray, she left the room. Thinking that further inquiry would be very disagreeable to her, I forbore again mentioning the subject. Next day, our week being up, we departed for fresh woods and pastures new.

Our tour led us considerably farther north, but a month later saw us homeward bound. The nearest route by rail led us by X——. As we drew up at the station we noticed on the platform a parson, in whom we recognized one of the clergy of X—— whose church we had been to. Presently the door of our compartment was opened and he put in a lady, wished her good-by, the guard's whistle blew, and we were off. After a short time we fell into conversation with the lady, and found her to be the clergyman's wife. Among other things we asked after Miss G——.

"Oh, Miss G——," she replied; "she is very well, but I hear, poor thing, she has not had a very good season."

"I am sorry to hear that," I replied; "why is it?" She was silent for a minute, and then related to us the following facts:

"At the beginning of the season a rather untoward

event occurred at Miss G——'s lodgings. An elderly lady took one of the flats for a month. She had with her an attendant about thirty years old. Before long Miss G—— observed that they were not on very good terms, and one morning the old lady was found dead in her bed.

"A doctor was at once called in, who, on viewing the body, found there were very suspicious marks round the neck and throat, as if a person's fingers had been tightly pressed upon them. The maid, on hearing this, at once became very restless, and going to her bedroom, which was at the top of the house, packed a small bag and, having put on her things, was about to descend the stairs, when, from hurry or agitation, she missed her footing, and falling to the bottom, broke her neck.

"But not the least extraordinary part of the business was that not the slightest clue could be obtained as to who the lady was, the linen of herself and her maid having only initials marked on it. The police did their best by advertising and inquiry, but all they could find out was that they had come straight to X—— from Liverpool, where they had arrived from America. There they were traced to the Fifth Avenue Hotel, in New York, where they had been known only by the number of their room, and to which they had come from no one knew whither. Enough money was found in the lady's trunk to pay the expenses of their funerals. An open verdict was returned at the inquests which were held. The police took possession of their belongings, and have them, no doubt, at the present moment."

At this point the train stopped, the lady wished us "Good-morning," and got out of the carriage; and we, as we steamed south, were left to meditate on this strange but perfectly true story, and to solve as we best could the still unanswered question of "Who was the third maid?"

One of those minor incidents of the war of which history takes but slight notice, but which was serious enough to the few men involved. J. L. Ruple tells the story in the Pittsburg *Press*.

CLEARING OUT A RIFLE-PIT.

CONSIDERABLY to the right of our four rifle-pits, well up the bluff and immediately under cover of the enemy's sharpshooters, was a small bunch of shrubbery on a shelf. Evening, midnight, and morning, shots were fired at exposed parties entering the pits, and often with fatal results or serious wounds. No flashes of light nor puffs of smoke could be seen to locate these mysterious shots. One morning, by an accident, we were enabled to discover them. An explosion occurred, followed by a dull thud, and a puff of smoke arose from behind the bushes and quickly disappeared, and we were now assured that our game lay there, but how to dislodge them was a problem hard to solve. It was the height of folly to approach them in front, and even under cover of night it was exceedingly dangerous. They, having advantage of the elevation and cover, could see and reach us, while we could neither see nor reach them. They were masters of the situation for the time being. They had their heavy guns trained on the mouth of the pits, but could quickly change them to suit an approaching enemy. The men began to have a superstitious dread of these four pits after being stationed in them, inasmuch as they feared to place their guns in position, and were too timid to use them after they had been placed.

We had plenty of dare-devils in our camp who would have faced Satan if necessary, but they were not marksmen. Some of them expressed themselves by saying, "If we had guns that would scatter, we'd scale the bluff and lick Pemberton and his whole army." From these men volunteers were called, and many responded. The one who was to lead them chose twelve of the most reckless and daring. On the first stormy night we were to scale the bluff and wipe out of exist-

ence the men behind the bushes. Fortunately a short time before, on the Sunflower River, quite a number of guerillas were captured, armed with shot-guns and squirrel-rifles. These shot-guns were now brought into requisition and loaded with a minié-ball and buck-shot. We had not long to wait for the adventure. In a few days, and toward evening, a beautiful storm broke upon us, and the boys were in their glory. At two o'clock in the morning, in a heavy rain, the ascent began. The rain made the earth slippery and the scaling of the bluff laborious, but the roaring wind and soft soil deadened all sounds. When the shelf was gained all lay down.

A flash of lightning revealed the quarry's place in a small flat tent. Our leader arose and approached the tent, walked around it, and from a rent in the rear looked in on the occupants. There were six, three on duty and three lying down. The tent was closely shut in on all sides, with a woollen blanket in front.

Having their guns set they fired through this blanket, which prevented the flash from being seen and caused the shots to seem mysterious. After making these observations the leader returned to his men and ordered them to arise and move forward. As they stood waiting orders, every word spoken in the tent could be heard.

The men were talking of home. Then they spoke of the siege, and wondered if Johnson would ever come to their relief, or if the siege would ever be raised. They spoke of their rations and wondered how much longer they must starve. One said: "Hoe-cake and no bacon don't make a man fat." Another remarked: "Oh for one square meal at mamma's table!"

In this vein the conversation ran until our leader, with a few swift sweeps of a knife, laid the tent open. Three men were sitting around their guns and three were lying down, with the flickering rays of a tallow candle shedding its dim light around them. At sight of us they were dumfounded and could neither speak nor move, but stared at us as though we were spectres or beings from another world.

We had strict orders to destroy this nest at all hazard. To obey this order would be the complete de-

struction of six men who had never harmed us—they to be hurled into eternity unaware and unrepentant. Their conversation of home and loved ones had touched a tender chord in the heart of the leader, and the order to "fire" was the most reluctant one he ever gave. It was impossible to make them prisoners and take them to camp. The order was no sooner spoken than they were shot to death where they sat and lay. With the quickness of thought the bushes were cut down and the tent thrown over the bluff. The destruction complete, the retreat began; and such a retreat! With the lightning flashing and the storm roaring we started down the hill. Instantly the top of the bluff became one sheet of flame, and lead whizzed through the air as thick as hail. The mouth of hell seemed to have burst open, shooting forth venomous tongues of sulphurous fire to lap us up. From the wild yells and loud curses pandemonium seemed to have opened up, and the devil and his imps were holding high carnival. The continual zip! zip! zip! of the minié-balls was most acute and agonizing music, fit only for his satanic majesty's doxology.

As we started down the bluff the man in front threw up his hands, exclaiming, "O my God!" and dropped to the ground. I stumbled over him and never regained my footing until I struck the level, bruised and bleeding. Four men fell upon the side of the bluff and three more upon the level ground. How one reached the wood alive seemed a miracle to all. Not one escaped without some hurt.

Among the "Queer Stories" published in London *Truth*, this one is, in many respects, the queerest.

AN EMBARRASSING EPISODE.

"SECOND-CLASS, sir! Here you are, sir!"

And the speaker, a railway porter, opened the door of a second-class compartment on one of the Scotch mails, which was already beginning to steam slowly out of Peterborough station.

The traveller addressed hustled into the carriage with more energy than dignity of motion, and sank back on the cushioned seat, very red in the face and panting vigorously. Mr. Joshua McParson was an oldish man, rather stout, and accustomed to move deliberately. Hence the necessity of running to catch the mail had "taken it out" of him with some effect. Indeed, it was fully ten minutes before his lungs resumed their normal condition of respiration.

Looking round the compartment, he saw that it contained only one occupant besides himself, a young lady, seated in the opposite corner. A second glance at her, as she reclined with her head back, her eyes closed, and her lips parted, breathing with monotonous regularity, showed him that she was asleep. And he took the opportunity of a careful survey.

She was very pretty and remarkably well dressed. Everything about her travelling appliances suggested affluence and comfort, from the costly fur rug in which her feet were wrapped to the silver-fitted travelling-bag which stood open on the seat at her side. Close to the bag lay a pile of newspapers and periodicals, surmounted by a "yellow-back" railway novel. The old gentleman glanced at the title, and as he noted it a look of stern disapprobation appeared upon his face. He knew the book by reputation as one of dangerously flippant tendencies; and being a pillar of the Scottish Kirk and severely puritanical in his views, he regarded with scant favor even the soberest works of fiction.

Of course, the scathing glance which he cast at the objectionable novel and then transferred to its owner

was quite lost on the slumbering young lady. And Mr. Joshua McParson, feeling, no doubt, the futility of thus wasting his "sweetness" on the desert air, took up his *Times* and began to peruse the money market intelligence assiduously.

He remained absorbed in this study for some time, too much taken up with it to have any thought to spare for his travelling companion, until he was aroused again to an active consciousness of her presence by hearing her make a sudden movement. Glancing quickly over the top of his newspaper, he saw that she had opened her eyes and was sitting up. She was looking rather hard at him—surprised, very likely, at his presence in the compartment, and wondering how he had come there. At any rate, she did not appear to be troubled with shyness, for instead of withdrawing her gaze when he looked up at her, she continued to stare him in the face with the most perfect coolness. And each time, during the next few minutes, that he peered at her round the screen of his paper, he found her eyes turned upon him in the same steady stare.

Mr. McParson began to feel rather uncomfortable. He had a constitutional horror of boldness in women, and a nervous dread of being made the object of any attempted familiarity—especially in a railway carriage. Perhaps this well-dressed young lady might be an actress, or some abandoned creature of that description; and——

His speculations were interrupted by another sudden movement on the part of the young lady, which caused him to peep at her once more. She was now standing up, but her eyes still looked straight at him in the same unswerving gaze. Something, however, about them struck him this time which he had not noticed before. There was a sort of deadness, a lack of intelligence, in them; for though they were turned directly upon himself, they did not appear to *see* him. Could it be that the girl was blind?

He cleared his throat, coughed, and rustled his newspaper; but her face remained absolutely unmoved, giving no token that she had heard the sounds or was in any wise conscious of his presence. That was very unlike blind people, who were always so quick to

notice. Besides—as his eye fell upon the novel and the magazines—a blind person would not take works of literature for her travelling companions. No. Blindness could scarcely be the explanation of her very strange demeanor. But if not that, what then? Was she in a state of coma? Or was she, perhaps, a lunatic?

The notion of this last possibility made him decidedly uneasy; and his heart began to beat with increased speed in his portly breast.

He watched her narrowly and anxiously. In a minute, steadying herself with one hand by the rail of the rack, she began to walk slowly across the compartment. Then the truth seemed to dawn upon Mr. McParson. *She had never awakened at all, but was now walking in her sleep!*

This conviction did not bring much comfort to the old gentleman's mind. For though it was a shade better to be shut in a railway carriage with a sleep-walker than with a lunatic, still even the former condition of affairs was sufficiently awkward, and he fervently wished that he had got into another compartment.

However, there he was, with no possible chance of escape. So there was little use in wishing. He had better devote his energies to making the best of the situation. Only, what was he to do? The young lady was moving slowly toward the door of the carriage.

Suppose she should try to open it and get out! He should be obliged to stop her by force, with the almost certain result of waking her up. And *that* (as he had heard) was liable to cause fatal consequences. He was on the horns of a most embarrassing dilemma; and as he realized its full horrors, a sickly pallor succeeded to the previously rubicund hue of Mr. McParson's countenance.

But when the young lady reached the door of the carriage, and Joshua McParson, with his heart in his mouth, was about to lay a detaining hand upon her arm, she suddenly turned round and began to walk the other way. The old fellow noticed now that she was lifting her feet unnecessarily high, like a person ascending steps; and he concluded that she imagined herself to be going up-stairs. This view was soon to receive confirmation of a strange and startling kind.

While he was still watching her, with anxious alarm, in case she might try to get out of the door at the other end of the carriage, he saw her, to his immense relief, stop her peregrination and sink down upon the seat. "Thank heaven," he murmured. "I hope she will now wake up, before she attempts any more walking." But he soon found that he had been somewhat premature in his expression of gratitude.

The young lady's first act after sitting down was extraordinary, perhaps, though not at all frightening, being merely to take off her bonnet and lay it upon the seat beside her. But it soon became clear to her horrified companion that this had only been the prelude to a far more alarming and embarrassing purpose. For after calmly divesting herself of her outer jacket, she next proceeded to unbutton and take off the bodice of her dress! What, in the name of horrors, did this mean? What on earth did the sleeping young lady dream that she was doing?

Her next move threw some light upon the matter. She commenced, with great deliberation, to take the hair-pins out of her hair, and let it down about her neck and shoulders. Then, possessing herself of a hair-brush from the travelling-bag at her side, she proceeded to brush her long, thick tresses very energetically.

Mr. McParson was not a genius in point of penetration; but by putting two and two together—that is, by comparing the young lady's former action of appearing to walk up-stairs with her present occupation—he had sufficient intelligence to divine the motive influence at work within her.

She imagined herself in her bedroom, just retiring for the night; and the notion of disrobing, with which her sleeping thoughts were busy, had set her unconscious hands performing that task in very earnest.

The old gentleman did not arrive at this conclusion all in a minute; but when he did arrive at it, he felt no doubt whatever that he had hit the right nail on the head. And as he began to realize the consequences likely—nay, certain—to result from such a situation, he felt something more than embarrassed and horrified.

The worst part of it was, he felt helpless to do any-

thing. He dared not wake the young woman up, not only because of the danger to her life involved in so doing, but also because, even if she got over *that* safely, she would be so startled, taken aback, and overwhelmed at finding herself in such a situation that, before he had time to give any explanations, she would probably shriek out for help. And should the train be stopped and they two be found, under such conditions, alone together in the carriage, why, matters would look rather bad for him, to say the least of it.

On the other hand, to let her proceed further with the work of disrobing was to make his present position even more distressingly embarrassing than it was. And, of course, the more advanced the state of déshabille in which she found herself when she ultimately woke up, the more intense would be her agitation and horror. Yet what could he do to stop her? He was, in this respect, as helpless as an unborn babe.

There is no denying, indeed, that the situation was sufficiently awkward, and calculated to make the most bold and reckless of men wish himself safe out of it. But an ordinary person can scarcely realize the overpowering horror, trepidation, and dismay which it produced in this prim and pompous old Puritan. He sat motionless in his seat, wiping the clammy moisture from his forehead and looking the very picture of helpless desperation, his eyes rivetted in a horror-struck gaze upon the unconscious young lady.

By-and-by she stopped brushing her hair and put the brush back in the bag. Now would come a still more embarrassing condition of things. Of course, she would proceed with her disrobing. But no! Apparently, she was under the impression that she had completed that task. For her next move was to stretch herself at full length upon the seat and draw up her railway rug over her—like a person getting into bed.

As Mr. McParson watched her go through this latter evolution, he was conscious of a considerable sense of relief. It was something that she had stopped so soon in the process of undressing, and had not carried out her unconscious task to the bitter end. Besides, she was now, for the present, in a state of quiescent repose; thus giving him a minute or two in which to

consider his position without being momentarily agitated and distracted by some fresh vagary on her part.

But due reflection did not bring much comfort with it, after all. Looking at his watch, he saw that in twenty minutes they were due at Grantham. What if the young lady did not resume her garments before the train stopped at that station? To say that it would be highly embarrassing for him to be discovered alone with her under such conditions would only be to put it feebly. For though there was nothing absolutely improper in the young lady's present state of undress, except conventionally, still, in these matters, the conventional standard was everything.

Five minutes passed, and the young lady slumbered peacefully on; while Mr. McParson felt, with a sinking heart, that he was being helplessly hurried forward to his doom.

"Good heavens!" he groaned, miserably. "I wish that she would now take it into her head to dream, that she was getting up, and would put her clothes on again. What would I not give at this minute to have the controlling of her fancies!"

He consulted his watch again. Matters were getting more and more desperate. In less than a quarter of an hour they would be at Grantham. Then, all of a sudden, an idea flashed across his mind, which made him bring his hand sharply down upon his knee and exclaim determinedly:

"'Pon my word, I'll try it. It's desperately unlikely to succeed. But I *do* believe it's the only chance. And, at any rate, it can do no harm."

After a minute or so of close reflection, during which he bit his nails in a most agitated and excited manner, Mr. McParson prepared to put his idea into effect. He had heard that the sleeping fancies of people in the young lady's state might sometimes be shaped or modified by external circumstances. And he now intended to make a desperate effort to influence his slumbering companion through these means.

His first experiment was to rap sharply with his knuckles on the door of the compartment, anxiously watching the sleeper's face as he did so. With a thrill

of excitement, almost of triumph, he saw her lips move and heard her drowsily murmur, "Come in!"

This preliminary success stimulated him to persevere with his intention. And with a look of grave and breathless anxiety, which showed that he was quite unconscious of the irresistibly comic part he was enacting, he raised his deep voice to a piping falsetto, and said, with as good an imitation of a chambermaid as he could manage:

"Time to get up, ma'am. Here's your hot water, ma'am!"

His desperate and unlikely design succeeded beyond his wildest hopes. The slumberer threw off her rug, rose, and stretched herself; then, after going through certain inexplicable movements, which Mr. McParson guessed to be imaginary ablutions, she proceeded carefully and deliberately to do her hair up. This step completed, she donned her dress-bodice, then her travelling-jacket, and, finally, her bonnet; the old gentleman watching her, as she went through these several grades of her toilet, with an ever-increasing sense of relief, triumph, and self-congratulation. And certainly there is no denying that he owed his escape from a most embarrassing situation entirely to his own ingenuity.

The jerking caused by the application of the brake to stop the train as it ran into Grantham at last really woke the young lady. She sat up, rubbed her eyes, and stared about her in a dazed sort of manner, appearing rather startled to find another passenger in the compartment. But she soon regained her composure, and regarded Mr. McParson with a perfectly unembarrassed gaze—a thing which she would have found it rather difficult to do had she been ever so dimly conscious of the figure which she had presented to him a quarter of an hour before.

As for the worthy Scot, he was much too thankful for his escape to run the most remote possibility of further risk; so he left the carriage at Grantham and continued his journey northward in another compartment, hugging himself not a little on the ready wit which had won him salvation from an apparently inevitable fiasco.

A rare sort of courage was that possessed by this man. His story is well worth reading—especially so, as it is true.

A HERO.

It was a scene that no man can fittingly describe, that no man who witnessed it can ever forget. Fifteen brave and well-armed men had started out from Bannack City in the early days of April to search for gold, and near the middle of May, with their numbers sadly reduced by death from the arrows and bullets of Indian foes, they had only one thought—to fight their way back to civilization or die as befitted the high code of chivalry recognized by the pioneers of the West. They might have made a dash for it and cut their way out by very boldness, but to have done that would have been to abandon Henry Bell, who was fearfully wounded, but for whom there yet remained a hope. So he was placed upon a horse and the little cavalcade moved upon its forlorn way. The Indians were all around them, waiting for a chance to rush in and give the finishing blow with the least possible danger to themselves.

They had moved twenty miles since daybreak, slowly picking their way over the snow upon the mountains. At four in the afternoon, weary and cold, they halted to give Bell needed rest and to prepare supper. Pickets were thrown out and the other men had begun to unpack, when one named York gave the alarm that Indians were approaching. Each man sprang for his rifle, when suddenly a shot was heard in their very midst. A glance at Geery told the story. With a deadly pallor upon his face, but with head erect, he stood leaning upon his gun. He said: "Boys, I have foolishly ended my life." In his haste he had grasped his rifle by the muzzle, the hammer had caught in a blanket and had been drawn back, and the ball had struck him in the breast, shattering his shoulder and making a mortal wound.

His comrades helped him to a sitting posture. He

then calmly opened his shirt, and pointing to the wound told them that he could have only a few hours to live. "But that is too long for you to remain here," he added. "The sun is going down and the Indians will be upon you. It would be impossible to defend yourselves in this place." Then he turned his brave eyes to Captain Stuart and said: "Jim, tell the boys I'm fatally wounded."

His comrades saw what was in his mind and begged him to take no thoughts of them, except to let them make him as comfortable as they might during his final hours. But all the answer he made was to reach for his pistol, hold it firmly in his hand, and give them warning that any endeavor to take it from him would only hasten the inevitable end.

No one made the attempt; but with tears in their eyes and forgetting the dangers hedging them in, his comrades attempted to reason with him, and to persuade him that with help he might pull through, as Bell was already doing. But he knew as well as they that the end was a matter of a few hours at the most. Turning again to Stuart, he urged him to tell the boys how desperate was his case, and "Captain Jim," with tears in his eyes and a choking voice, could only say: "Never mind, Geery, we will stay by you; all the Indians in the world couldn't drive us away."

The decision of this plain frontiersman was made, and nobody could shake his heroic resolve. "I know you would all stay by me," he said, "and die for me, and remember that I am not committing suicide. It is only for a short time, in any case. I am only shortening my own life by a few hours to prevent you losing yours. God knows I don't want to die; I fear death, but I have a hope beyond it."

He held the muzzle of the weapon to his breast.

"Remember where I am buried—this gorge in the mountains. Describe it to my friends if you live to reach them. God bless you all! I must die, and in time for you to bury me and escape before dark."

He was about to pull the trigger, when the voice of Stuart came from the group of pale-faced men who could have calmly faced anything but this: "For God's sake, Geery, don't—but if you must, don't shoot your-

self there. It will only prolong your agony. Place your pistol to your temple."

The change was made. "God bless you all and take you safely out of this."

The men turned and walked away; none of them could face the final scene. The finger came down upon the trigger, the cap exploded, but there was no shot. Sam T. Hauser, afterward governor of Montana, stepped forward and said: "Geery, for God's sake desist—this is a warning." To this he merely made answer: "I don't know what to think of it; it never snapped before." Again cocking the weapon, he engaged a moment in silent prayer, again pressed his finger, and the deed was done.

The men gathered around his dead body. Tears were in the eyes of all, and some could not speak for the sobs that shook them. "Waiting some half-hour," says Governor Hauser, "after he had drawn his last breath, we buried him as he desired in his soldier overcoat. We had scarcely finished his burial when the pickets announced that the Indians were within gunshot, yet there was no firing. After our last sad duty was finished, 'Jim' directed us to pile limbs and brush on the grave and burn them, so as to conceal it from the Indians and prevent them from digging poor Geery up for his scalp and clothes. We then gathered our things together as best we could, and, packing up, moved on in a single file out of the gorge, camping, or rather hiding, in the sage-brush some miles away."

The sacrifice was not made in vain. The little party made its way back to Bannack City without further loss of life.

The man lacked nerve, and so he serves as another illustration of the truth that the worst thing one can do is to run away from danger. The story—hitherto unpublished—was translated for ROMANCE by I. Furst from the German of Samuel Behrend.

"HE."

"GOOD-NIGHT, Mr. Secor."

"Good-night, gentlemen."

"My regards to your son-in-law, and please tell him not to disappoint us on Wednesday."

"Certainly, I shall tell him. Once more, good-night."

The landlord of the inn closed the door behind the gentlemen who had been the last of his guests.

Mr. Secor was a man not far from sixty years of age. With active and vigorous steps he walked along the carriage-road, which was brightly illuminated by the moon. On the right-hand side of the road was a river, and on the left side rose a mountain, across which a foot-path ran parallel with the drive. A short distance from the inn the mountain rose more steeply.

"A beautiful evening," he said to himself. "It would be a pity to go to sleep so early. I think I shall find more pleasure in following the road over the mountain, past the red cross."

Not long after Mr. Secor had turned into the road across the mountain a man emerged from the bushes skirting the drive and followed him. The walk of the man was stealthy and noiseless; his form crouched like that of a cat preparing for a spring. A broad-brimmed hat covered his head and hid his face. Suddenly he stopped and raised his hand to his forehead. "A good idea," he murmured; "that will be much better—it will look more like a pure accident; he came from his wine, with unsteady steps he passed the red cross and fell into the depth below."

Mr. Secor walked along in good spirits. Higher and higher he ascended the mountain, and the view that presented itself became ever more magnificent. He had reached a point where the mountain descended

almost vertically toward the drive, while the foot-path ran close to the edge. Many years ago a minister had fallen from this point. His congregation had erected to his memory a cross of red brick, and the authorities had placed a railing there to prevent a similar accident. The cross was neglected and overgrown with weeds; the railing was rickety and partly broken. The view from this point revealed the whole neighborhood in the bright moonlight. Mr. Secor stood close by the cross and enjoyed the fascinating scenery. "That is Rayville," he said; "there is Waldersee, and on the other side is our property—indeed, I can see as far as my house and that of my daughter and son-in-law. Truly, a glorious——"

The sentence was never finished, for a heavy blow descended on his head which stupefied him. He reeled, and at the same time a pair of strong hands grasped his shoulders and flung him down the steep mountain side. The unknown man listened a moment in dreadful suspense. A dull sound broke the silence, and then all was still as before. He pulled his hat farther over his face and walked away with firm steps.

In the morning the shattered body was found on the drive. The watch, money, and other valuables were untouched, and it was believed that Mr. Secor, arrived at the red cross, had stumbled against the rickety railing and fallen into the depth below. He had come from his wine at the inn, and this fact went far to discredit the idea of wilful murder. To be sure, nobody had ever seen him drunk, but he had taken a dangerous road at night—a road he usually avoided; hence it was supposed that he had drunk more wine than was his wont, although this fact was denied by his friends and the landlord of the inn.

The body was buried, and the broken railing near the red cross was replaced by a new one.

* * * * * *

In a hotel far from the scene of the tragedy just related, three gentlemen were conversing, while a fourth member of the party was glancing at a newspaper.

"There is a job for you, inspector," said the reader suddenly to one of the others. "About three months

ago," he continued, "a man met with an accident between Rayville and Waldersee by falling down the side of a mountain; and now they have found in a bush near the scene of the accident a hammer bearing the label of the dealer. The latter declared, on examination, that he had sold that hammer to an unknown man on the same day that the old gentleman met his death."

One of the gentlemen rose, asked the waiter for a glass of water, and drank it hastily. "Nonsense!" he said, resuming his seat; "how can the dealer know which particular hammer was sold on that day?"

"Well, that is sometimes very simple," replied the inspector. "For instance, it may have been the last of a certain line of goods which the dealer wished to clear out, and therefore he may have taken particular note of the day."

The other gentleman emptied his glass with a barely perceptible restlessness.

"This announcement," continued the inspector, "ends my vacation. I have been transferred to the Waldersee district. Under the circumstances, I shall return to-morrow. I am anxious for an interview with the murderer if there be one."

The other gentleman quickly grasped his glass and handed it to a passing waiter; then, after a pause, he said: "I am sure, inspector, that your investigation will have only negative results, for the conditions under which the body was found indicate that the man lost his life by a mis-step. You must have learned from the papers that the dead man's watch, chain, money, and valuables were all found on his person, so that a murder for the purpose of robbery is out of the question."

"That proves nothing to me, after the finding of the hammer," replied the inspector. "I assume that the man, after receiving a blow from the hammer, staggered and fell into the depth, where the murderer could not follow him."

"He might easily have gone back along the path to the drive where the dead man lay."

"That would have been very foolish, my dear sir," said the inspector. "The fall from the rock, although

it was night, might have brought people to the spot. Hence it was wise to leave the valuables. If you have no better proofs, I shall take lodgings in the neighborhood."

"In that case I hope you will do me the honor of staying with me. I live in the neighborhood, and unfortunately I am closely connected with this sad affair, for the dead man was my father-in-law. My name is Williams."

"What!" exclaimed the others as with one voice, "the murdered man was your father-in-law?"

"Mr. Secor was your father-in-law?" asked the gentleman who had been reading the paper.

"My most excellent father-in-law," repeated Mr. Williams.

"Secor! Now I remember reading the name in the papers when the case was reported. Charles Secor, was it not?" asked another gentleman.

Something like a tremor passed over the face of the person addressed, and it seemed as if he had not heard the question.

The eyes of the inspector at once opened wide and he sat up very straight. But this expression of emotion lasted but an instant, then he resumed his former appearance. "Charles Secor!" he said, as if trying to recall a fact in his memory, but keeping his eye on the son-in-law. "It seems to me that I have come across the name once before in criminal literature. Charles Secor—Charles Secor?"

Williams rose excitedly from his chair, but with an effort again took his seat. "Gentlemen," he said, gasping for breath, "I beg you will drop the subject. The dead man was so dear to me that I cannot hear him mentioned without becoming agitated."

"Well, we can talk of other things, although I should like to hear more from you about the accident. Perhaps to-morrow your excitement will have subsided," said the inspector.

Different matters were discussed, but it seemed as if none of them suited Williams, for he soon bade the company good-night and retired to his room.

Long after Williams had left the company he walked up and down his room. "A miserable affair for me to

lose the hammer that time. I do not fear discovery, but the society of this inspector, which is inconvenient, more than inconvenient to me; yet I had to ask him to my house for prudence' sake. How often now shall I be obliged to hear the name of the dead man; perhaps I shall be compelled to pronounce it myself. It is exasperating how chance sometimes plays tricks. In order to avoid hearing the name from my wife, I travelled about for months, and just on my travels I must be reminded of him and hear of him. Of course the inspector would have come into the neighborhood anyhow, but I should not have been obliged to ask him to my house."

A rap at the door interrupted his meditations. "Excuse my disturbing you, Mr. Williams," said the voice of the landlord outside. "Here is a telegram for you." Williams opened the door to admit the messenger, while the landlord turned back.

"From home," murmured Williams, growing pale.

With trembling hand he signed the receipt and gave it to the messenger. Once more alone, he opened the envelope with feverish haste, read the paper, and threw it on the table. Stepping back a few paces he covered his eyes with his hand.

"I must return to my wife," he murmured. "Oh, if she would only stop talking about the dead man; if she would not force me to pronounce his name! I cannot pronounce this name! I cannot? Am I not a man? What do I fear? A name, nothing but a word? I won't be afraid. I will prove it to myself that I am not afraid. I will pronounce it, this name, ten times, a thousand times! The dead man's name was"—he shuddered and a deadly pallor overspread his face. "I cannot!" he groaned, "I cannot!" And sinking in a chair he covered his face with his hands.

Having passed a restless night, Williams got up. It was early yet and nobody in the hotel was astir. He called the landlord and ordered the carriage. The landlord rose grumbling and called the porter. Having paid his bill, Williams went down to hurry the harnessing of the horses. He told the landlord to give his regards to the inspector and to inform him that a telegram had called him home.

"A pleasant voyage to you," came from a window above. It was the voice of the inspector, who had heard the last words.

Williams was disagreeably surprised, but without showing his annoyance, as he thought, he called back: "Good-morning, inspector. Up so early?"

"I did not go to bed last night," the inspector replied. "The finding of the hammer at the point where Mr. Secor met with the accident set me to thinking over similar cases."

Williams felt as if something cool passed over his face.

"Do you really believe that the man was murdered?" he asked, forcing an embarrassed smile.

"The hammer, my dear sir, the hammer."

"Never mind the hammer; it came there by chance."

The inspector shrugged his shoulders: "I think otherwise; but let us drop that." He closed the window and suddenly was at Williams's side. "I have something to tell you," he said with a grave face.

"I am listening to you."

"No, we must be alone. May I ask you to follow me to my room for a few minutes?" The earnest manner in which the inspector spoke these words sounded to Williams almost like a command, and he was not accustomed to be commanded. Still, he followed the inspector, to whom he said, with a smile: "Your zeal to discover criminals is so great that I may almost congratulate you in advance, for you are sure to rise in the world."

As he entered the inspector's room he started violently, for on the table lay a hammer, and this hammer was very similar to the one with which he had stupefied his father-in-law that night. Was it the same hammer? A terrible suspicion began to possess him, but not a muscle of his face twitched, nothing showed what was passing within him.

"The request I have to make of you, sir," said the inspector, "is a trifling one. I wish to ask you to say nothing, either in your house or out of it, of my intention to discover the murderer of Mr. Secor, lest the criminal take precautions; for you may depend upon

it, sir, there is no doubt that your wife's father has been murdered."

Williams's face assumed an incredulous smile.

Despite the smile, the inspector saw that Williams was ready to drop from terror.

He continued: "The medico-legal examination of the body showed, besides the injuries to the skull from the fall, one caused by a blunt instrument. The place where the event occurred was searched and the hammer was found." Here he seized the implement and held it close to Williams's face.

"You will be surprised," the inspector went on, "that the paper stated only yesterday that a hammer had been found near the scene of the accident. This was my doing; it is one of our professional tricks. I may explain it another time; but now—the murderer is in this house."

"In this house? Impossible!"

"This evening I shall unmask him."

"Then you will remain here?"

"I shall remain here. To be sure, I told you last night that I intended to start to-day for your neighborhood, but that was done merely to inspire the murderer with a sense of security."

"Was the man present in the room?"

"He was. He started when I mentioned the name — the name — oh, I cannot now recall the name. For some time past my memory for names has been bad."

Williams trembled at the idea of having to pronounce the name. By the "he" who had been present last night the inspector seemed to mean him. He only wished to convince himself more fully. By a single act he could demolish the inspector's hypothesis, but Williams was unable to perform it. Yet it had to be done—he must pronounce the name: everything was at stake. In the face of the great danger his nerves seemed to gather strength. From this moment when the inspector was trying to recall the name he awaited his attacks with more resolution; by putting on a bold front he hoped to parry them all.

"Well, if you cannot recall the name, take another," he said in a jocose way.

"Secor," said the inspector; "was not his name Secor?"

Williams nodded.

"In many cases murderers have a dread of pronouncing the name of their victim, and I base my system on this fact."

These words were spoken in a cutting tone.

"May the earth open and swallow you up," was Williams's comment, of course inaudible. For though the inspector had exposed himself by this remark, Williams felt that it was merely a feint and that his antagonist was pressing steadily forward. It was as if an immense object were rolling toward him and would presently overwhelm him. If the hangman had stood there ready at the time, Williams would have opposed no resistance. But this sensation was only momentary; then he reflected that there were no proofs against him, but that he might become his own accuser. He said, therefore: "I do hope, sir, that you will succeed in discovering the murderer, although I doubt whether he was murdered."

"He? Who?"

"Oh, he—the dead man." A cold sweat covered Williams's forehead; the name of the victim would not come over his lips.

"He, the dead man? In the name of the law, sir, who? Which dead man?" thundered the inspector's voice.

Williams shook visibly. "The dead man—I mean the murdered man—Secor—Charles Secor."

It was out. But Williams's strength was broken. He sank back in his chair, his body all a-tremble. But when presently the inspector stretched forth his hand toward him and said, "In the name of the law I arrest you for the murder of Charles Secor," despair took possession of him. A dagger flashed in his hand, and with a cry he threw himself on the inspector. But the latter was prepared; he sprang aside with agility and brought his small club down with great force on the criminal's arm, so that it dropped as if paralyzed, and the dagger fell from his hand.

"In the name of the law I arrest you, the murderer of Charles Secor," the inspector cried again, now pointing his revolver at Williams.

"Mercy!" cried the latter; "have pity, mercy!" and sank on his knees. The inspector tore open the door and called for aid. In a few seconds the landlord, his porters, and the guests crowded into the room.

"That man is a murderer!" exclaimed the inspector.

"Mercy! for pity's sake, have mercy!" cried Williams, raising his arms in supplication. Then he got up, swayed to and fro, and said: "Yes, I am his murderer. I needed his money for settling my affairs. I could not wait for his natural death." His hand fumbled in his pocket, from which he quickly carried an object to his mouth before the inspector could prevent him, and he fell lifeless to the ground, as though struck by lightning; a small vial dropped from his hand to the floor.

The inspector bent over him. "He has been his own executioner, with prussic acid," he said, shaking his head and evidently disappointed. "Well, Peters," he added, turning to one of the gentlemen, the same who had read the passage from the newspaper the night before, "I was right after all when I told you that it was strange for Williams to go travelling immediately after the death of his father-in-law."

"Upon my soul, you were right, inspector. But I thought at once that there must be something wrong with a person whom you were following, and I stood by you to the last minute. A pity he is dead."

Williams's body was buried without pomp; no friend threw a handful of earth upon his coffin: not a tear was shed. Although his poor unfortunate wife prayed for peace to his ashes, she could not weep over the murderer of her father.

The minister spoke a simple prayer, the sexton folded his hands in his customary manner. A few shovelfuls of yellow earth covered the coffin of the murderer and suicide, and that was the end.

It all ended happily—except, perhaps, for the man whose crankiness was responsible for the mishap—but the situation was serious while it lasted. The story was first told in the San Francisco *Argonaut* by Ada Cunnick Inchbold.

MISSING—A HUSBAND.

MARSHALL HUNTER and Olga Danhof had been declared man and wife at twelve o'clock that morning. The bridegroom was a successful young vine-grower of Sonoma County; the bride a daughter of his nearest neighbor. They had driven off to the railway station, followed by the good wishes of their combined families, and had arrived in San Francisco late in the afternoon. Rooms had been reserved for them over Sunday, and it was their intention to start for the East on Monday, to visit relatives of Mr. Hunter's, and spend the coming months in more congenial surroundings than the rainy monotony of a winter season in the country.

The usual electrical atmosphere enveloping ordinary bridal couples, discharging the secret of the newness of the bond to the rude gaze of a vulgar world, also betrayed its subtle presence around this distinguished and decidedly good-looking pair. Olga was of Danish extraction, and possessed the delicate, refined features, slender shape, and stately bearing common to her fellow-country women; and Marshall had been a university man and stroke in his college boat before he emigrated to California and took up ranching. At any rate, covert glances followed their course from the cars to the boat, from the boat to the hotel, and even there the elevator-boy beamed and glowed on Olga's unconscious face, as though he then and there took her under the special protection of his beneficent wing.

Mrs. Hunter retired behind the sliding-doors to remove all traces of the dusty journey, while Marshall delved into the mysteries of his travelling-bag to bring forth a still more immaculate neck-tie than the one already encircling his manly throat. After adjusting it entirely to his satisfaction, he stepped on tiptoe to

Olga's door and tapped gently. In response came a flutter of light footsteps, and the door glided just far enough back to allow a pretty head to peep out and inquire what was the matter.

"Only this, darling. I am going down to see about dinner, and tell them not to send all that pile of trunks up here. I may be a quarter of an hour, but not a minute longer." So saying, he took his young wife's face between his hands, gazed fondly into her eyes, and then kissed her full on the lips.

Blushing and smiling, Olga retreated, and in a few moments reappeared in the sitting-room fresh as a morning-glory. Her husband was still absent, so she made a tour of the room, and by wheeling the table to one side and manœuvring skilfully with some chairs in the way that women do, she contrived to dissipate the cold, sit-up-straight, lounge-if-you-dare mien assumed by each particular piece of furniture that has not been pushed or pulled into its place by feminine fingers. Some distant footsteps made her poise lightly on one foot by the door, to listen if they were her husband's. When they passed by without pausing at the threshold, she walked over to the window and sat down in a big easy-chair. It was Saturday afternoon; the streets were thronged with people; the traffic was noisy and vigorous; the lights were being turned on, as it was growing dusk. From Olga's point of view, limited by a country life to rare glimpses of human nature as met with in a busy city, especially in its buzzing, teeming centre, this was an interesting, engrossing sight. She forgot her new condition of life for the time being, till a figure crossing the street in the distant haze of the growing twilight reminded her of Marshall. She began to wonder where he was; she was growing hungry and it must be nearly dinner-time. She took out her watch; it was six o'clock. Why, he had been gone quite half an hour! She again turned her attention to the lively scene below, but her ears were alert to catch any sound that might be the herald of her husband's return.

Gradually the light faded from the room till all was dark but the running streaks reflected on the walls by the outside illuminations. Olga was slowly passing

from a state of wonder to one of keen resentment. Marshall had no business to leave her alone so long; she was not accustomed to hotels, and he must know she would not like to be left alone for an hour so soon after their arrival. She made up her mind to be silent and reserved upon his return, yet when ten minutes later she heard a key turn in the outer door, she forgot her stern resolve and rushed out, exclaiming: "Why, Marshall, wherever have you been?"

"Excuse me, ma'am! I didn't know you was here. I thought you was down at dinner," came in strange accents to Olga's frightened ears.

"Who is it? What do you want?" she faltered out.

"It's only the chambermaid, ma'am. Law, you've no light, ma'am; it's awful lonesome sitting in the dark," the good-natured woman went on in reassuring tones on catching sight of the pale, uneasy face before her.

"Thank you," said Olga with all the dignity, as she flattered herself, of a matron of at least five years' standing. "I preferred sitting in the dark till my husband came." The woman had already lighted the gas and proceeded to draw the heavy window-curtains closely together, wondering, at the same time, what the husband was about not to come and take his pretty young wife down to dinner in proper time. Some intuition made her turn kindly to Olga and say:

"Here is the bell-button, ma'am, and if you should happen to want anything the boy will answer it." She then went out, closing the door gently after her.

Olga resented interference of any kind, so was not as grateful as she ought to have been. She looked at her watch again; it was seven o'clock. It was really remarkable that Marshall still delayed. He knew she had eaten nothing at the grand wedding-spread before they left, and she was famishing. She put her watch on the table in front of her, and said: "If he does not come in ten minutes, I shall go down-stairs alone and have my dinner." This was mere bravado, as she inwardly knew, but it helped to kill time. It was the longest ten minutes she ever experienced, and before they were over she got up and paced impatiently up and down the room.

In front of the mirror she stopped and gazed at herself intently to see if she were looking as pale and hungry as she felt. Then she went down the little passage to the outer door of the rooms, and hesitated before gaining courage to open it and look out. The first glance into the corridor emboldened her to step outside and reconnoitre. Had she a lingering hope of catching sight of her husband's coat-tails round the corner, and was it the quenching of that hope or the rapid inroad of a rampant, healthy hunger that made her turn back quickly with a sick, sinking sensation at her heart? She felt she would cry in one moment if he did not come, and as he did not turn up in that limited space of time, she did cry, and felt all the better for it. Then she looked again in the mirror, reflected that red eyelids were unbecoming, and whiled away another ten minutes in bathing her eyes with cologne-water. A happy thought struck her. There was nothing to prevent her from ringing up the boy, and telling him she wanted some dinner brought to her room. No sooner thought than done. To her relief, the boy did not look at all astonished, and said "Yes'm!" with the same alacrity as if he were hourly in the habit of sending up stray meals to hungry people.

When he knocked at the door the second time, Olga forgot for an instant and jumped up delightedly to greet Marshall, as she fondly hoped. It is a painful confession, but true, nevertheless, that the well-appointed tray of savory, odorous edibles filling up the doorway restored her equanimity and instantly dispelled her disappointment.

"Well, if he doesn't come, he doesn't," she said, with stoical incoherence, as she sat down at the table with an air of resignation. This pretty plaintiveness soon changed its character when nine o'clock struck and she was still alone. Ten o'clock came round all too slowly, but brought no husband with it. She was frightened, indignant, frantic with dread and anger, in rapid succession. No one in the world could ever have had such a wedding-day as she had had. It was awful—shameful—preposterous! She wished she had never met Marshall, was furious with herself for having married him; naturally, like other heroines of both real

life and fiction, she wished she had never been born. No idea that some accident could have detained him crossed her mind till eleven o'clock. When it did flash across her, she rose as if inspired, went to the door, came back again, put on her hat, and then walked boldly out to the head of the staircase. She preferred walking down to meeting strangers in the close confines of the elevator. She went down briskly the first flight of stairs; then her pace slackened, her courage was oozing gently forth with each fresh step downward. The spectacle of a lady, young and pretty, descending the staircase at that late hour, with apparently such measured, calculating steps, glancing nervously from side to side, seemed to rouse deep interest in the loungers round the hall. They took their cigars from their mouths and gazed at her with a vacant, open-mouthed curiosity. Olga at last alighted on the mat at the foot of the stairs and looked anxiously around, not knowing what to do next. A man, leaning over the office counter, whispered to the clerk, who looked up and then instantly left his place and came forward to meet Olga. He almost electrified her with horror by speaking to her, although he merely inquired politely: "Can I do anything for you, madam?"

"No—no, thank you!" stammered Olga nervously; "that is—I mean to say—have you seen my husband?"

The man tried to keep his countenance, and succeeded admirably. "Your husband, madam?" as though silently pondering as to when he had had the extreme felicity of seeing him; "what name, may I ask?"

"Hunter—Mr. Marshall Hunter. He came down to see—to see about—" she could not mention dinner; it would be dreadful to let this strange man know exactly how long she had been waiting. "He came down to see about our baggage early in the evening."

"I saw the gentleman go out about six or half-past," put in another clerk, standing near enough to catch the remarks, and who had noticed Mr. and Mrs. Hunter come in when they arrived from the boat; "but I have not seen him since."

Down to zero sank Olga's hopes.

"Perhaps he's gone to the theatre, and, if so, he'll be

back directly, madam," said the first clerk, who, suddenly arraigned, as it were, before the appealing look that had, unknown to herself, gathered in Olga's dark eye, felt that the responsibility of this missing husband somehow shifted to his shoulders.

His answer, instead of reassuring her, drove all the blood from her heart. "Very probably," she said, with dignity; "I am much obliged," and, bending her head with stately courtesy, she turned round and retraced her steps to her apartment.

There she sat on the rack of suspense the whole of that dreary night. It was the first watch she had ever kept, and not once, but a score of times, did she jump up and hurry to the door, fancying she heard a voice, a tap, a footstep. Toward morning she lay down, weary and exhausted, on the couch and dozed off uneasily for an hour. Daylight only brought the painful reality more forcibly to view. "I will go home," she thought; "father will know. I will go home."

She moved about mechanically, and when she was dressed put a big, thick veil over her bonnet. No one must recognize her; no one must know till she reached her home. Her face seemed to have aged years during the night. Then she slipped down-stairs, hurried unperceived through the hall to the entrance, and stood alone in the street at seven o'clock in the morning. She took the first car that passed, but had half an hour to wait at the ferries before starting. It was Sunday morning, and the waiting-rooms were crowded, as usual, with light-hearted, merry holiday-seekers. Olga shrank from every eye into a dark, distant corner. The contrast between the happy bride of yesterday and the forsaken wife of to-day produced a sensation of humiliation that was worse to bear than the keenest physical pain or the severest mental sorrow.

A few hours later a strange buggy, driving up the road to the Danhof Ranch, drew more than one member of the family, with curiosity, to the front veranda. "Who can it be?" was the general remark.

"O father! it is Olga!" exclaimed Mrs. Danhof, breathlessly, too amazed to stir.

Mr. Danhof looked at the buggy and its occupant silently for a moment; then stopping further remarks

with an imperative "Hush!" he strode forward as the vehicle drew up at the steps. "Come to me, my child," he said, in inexpressibly tender tones, and without another word he took the shrinking, trembling figure in his arms and carried her bodily into the house. The others followed him silently, and the door was closed behind them. The driver gave a low, comprehensive whistle as he wheeled round, and drove back the way he had come, with a grave, dubious face.

* * * * * *

Ten minutes after leaving his wife Marshall Hunter turned on his heel to enter the elevator and return to her, when a slap on the shoulder and a brisk ejaculation of "Marshall, my boy, where did you spring from?" made him turn round sharply.

An old college chum stood there. Mutual explanations ensued, which ended in their retiring to drink each other's health, and more especially that of the bride. In the midst of an animated account as to how he intended spending the next few months, Marshall broke off suddenly with an agonized expression. "Confound it all!" he exclaimed, stamping his foot energetically.

"Why, what's the matter?" asked his companion.

"That cursed tooth of mine has started aching again; a charming accompaniment to one's honeymoon."

"Go and have it out, man," was the prompt reply.

"By Jove, I will! It won't take ten minutes," said Marshall, consulting his watch. He hesitated as to whether he should run and tell Olga, but decided not to. His friend accompanied him across the street and then went off. Marshall strode along, glancing right and left for a dentist's sign. He found one in the next block, tore up the stairs two steps at a time, looked breathlessly round for the right door, and as he reached it a man came out hastily and almost fell into his arms.

"Hey there! What's the matter?"

"Excuse me, no time to wait," the man said hurriedly; but he was not to be let off so easily as that. Marshall seized him by the arm and said:

"Are you Mr. Warner, the dentist?"

"Yes, sir; but I can't stop now. Office hours are up. I shall lose my boat."

"Catch the next one instead; I shall not keep you a moment," said Marshall; "I have only one obstinate old molar that needs a dig-out."

The man hesitated. "My assistant left half an hour ago, and I never perform an operation without him."

"Oh, bother the assistant; I don't want him, I assure you. I am in a desperate hurry myself, and have no wish to keep you here half the night." So saying, Marshall pulled the dentist by the arm back into his office.

Still expostulating, Mr. Warner put down his overcoat, lighted the gas, and pulled out the trays covered with the ugly implements of his profession, while Marshall seated himself expectantly in the operating-chair. As it happened, Marshall had struck one of the biggest cranks in the city in the person of Mr. Warner, who worthily maintained his reputation as such, even in the numerous branches of his profession. This operating-chair, for instance, was a patent of his own invention, and, to quote the strong language of one privileged occupant, was "a very devil of a chair." The unsuspicious patient was always politely requested to place his arms lightly on the elbow-rests at either side and to put his feet on the rail below. Regarding the order as part of the dreaded operation, he would meekly comply. There were two springs behind the chair, which, at a pressure from the dentist's fingers, caused certain joints in the wood-work to separate, and opened a hollow cavity beneath the arms and feet, into which they instantly dropped. The joints closed over them with a snap as soon as the springs were relieved from pressure.

Before Marshall knew what was happening, presto! his limbs were in a vise and he was an involuntary prisoner until the operation should be concluded. "Look here, this is hardly necessary. I don't intend to kick," he urged.

Mr. Warner, still grumpy at being detained beyond his usual time, persisted that he would only pull the tooth out under those conditions. People always said beforehand they were not going to move.

"Oh, very well," said Marshall, snappishly; "only do hurry up." He was in a fever of impatience to get back to Olga and wished he had never come.

After preliminary examination the dentist said: "Open your mouth," and upon being obeyed, he placed the customary wad to prevent it from closing during the operation. Then he turned one of the gas branches to within a foot of Marshall's face, and being quite ready he gave vent to a surly "Now!"

Marshall closed his eyes to prepare for the shock, but it seemed long in coming. Suddenly he heard a heavy body fall, with a thud, on the floor. He opened his eyes—the dentist had vanished. He looked down, and there was the man lying on the floor, flat on his back, with a white, drawn face.

"Great Scott! Here's a pretty go," thought Marshall, his first instinct to spring to the man's assistance being abruptly checked by the iron grasp of the patent chair. "I'd better yell out for help," he thought, forgetting the wad in his mouth.

"Kk-k-krr!" a prolonged gurgle, a fight between the tonsils and the aggressive, giant mouthful, ending fortunately in the latter's discomfiture, a struggle for breath and air, brought Marshall to the unpleasant consciousness that it was as impossible to cry out for help as it had been for him to jump up and procure it.

He kept still for a moment. He had not yet grasped the gravity of his situation, but it was beginning to dawn upon him. The man on the floor still lay motionless. "Let me consider," thought Marshall to himself; "the first thing is how to get out of this beastly chair." He gave a vehement tug here, a violent wrench there, strained every muscle of his sinewy, athletic limbs, with no apparent result but that of causing the springs to seem even more tenaciously fixed than they were before.

He glared at the dentist's limp figure; he did not feel in the least sorry for him. His one thought was Olga and how to get back to her. He pictured her listening expectantly for his footstep, and imagined how he would explain matters, and how sympathetic and tender her pretty eyes would grow. It was useless to struggle any longer; somebody would pass the room

soon, or come in; he would be freed very shortly. So he soothed himself for a few moments.

Soon heavy footsteps sounded on the stairs, voices became distinguishable. "Now it's all right," thought Marshall, immeasurably relieved; "I wish I could call out to them."

Nearer came the voices. "Old Warner's not gone yet. There's a light in his office. O Warner!" shouted a voice, "aren't you coming?" and a hand shook the door, which had a spring patent lock, also of Mr. Warner's invention.

A second's pause, then another voice: "The old beggar's in one of his crusty moods. Come along—we can't wait for him."

Marshall followed each sound and word with an intensity of concentrated thought that should have worked the same magic results as those achieved by a professional transferer of thought. He tried to call out, he knocked his head vigorously against the chair, and if the men had not been talking and shuffling their feet about impatiently, they would have wondered at and tried to discover the meaning of those curious sounds. However, they moved on, and the clatter of their steps on the bare wooden staircase grew more and more indistinct and gradually faded away in the distance. With each receding footfall, Marshall grew more desperate. From the certainty of immediate succor, he fell, with one deep swoop, to the horrible conviction that he was a hopeless prisoner. He was in despair. The building, which was small and cut up entirely into business-offices, was now as silent as the grave. The men who had just gone were evidently the last to leave.

After yielding for some moments to feelings of deep despondency, he again resolved to face the matter boldly and consider the situation from every aspect. "I am an unwilling prisoner—there is no doubt about that," he thought; "the man on the floor is dead—that is a disagreeable enough fact without any of the accompanying circumstances. This is my wedding-day, and of all unlucky beggars on the face of this earth I am the chief. My poor little bride is anxiously awaiting me, and has no idea where I am. My delay must appear extraordinary, considered from any and every

point of view. This is Saturday evening, and——" here Marshall's eyes blazed with passion; he inwardly cursed himself, his officious college friend—who had first put this confounded notion in his head—the dentist, and the world at large, vehemently and furiously. The thought which caused this severe mental perturbation was an appalling one. It was Saturday, therefore business would be virtually suspended till Monday morning. The building would be closed for another thirty-six hours. Nobody knew where he was; nobody could hear him, for he could not speak; was ever man more unfortunately situated, and on his wedding-day, too? Again he roused himself, and this time he fell into a tearing rage. He shook and fought with his rigid foe, twisted his arms almost out of their sockets, nearly dislocated his ankles in their convulsive contortions, threw the upper part of his body with stupendous force backward, in the vain hope of knocking the chair over and smashing it in its fall—he never considered that he would also run a risk of sharing in the general smash-up, should there happen to be one—but it was firmly screwed into the floor and never budged an inch.

Exhausted with so much fruitless effort, he paused, aching in every limb. His head was on fire, his feet were cold as ice. Now his jaws began to ache. How to get rid of the wad was the next consideration; but all he could do was to painfully shift the obstruction from side to side. These personal discomforts and physical miseries were nothing compared to his mental suffering. The thought of Olga drove him to distraction; he was afraid he should go mad; his brain whirled and reeled.

Meanwhile the evening had become well advanced. It was the hour when Olga had allowed herself to be comforted with an appetizing dinner, little suspecting the fearful situation of the unhappy cause of all her misery. As time wore on Marshall ran through the whole gamut of emotion and rage and finally settled down into a sullen, apathetic, would-be stoical mood. An undercurrent of hope that something unexpected would happen to release him kept him from absolute despair. It was well he did not realize that retention

till Monday morning might mean death itself, under these peculiar and strained conditions.

He began to look round and mechanically take in the character of his surroundings. The flaring gas-jet close to his face at first dazzled his eyes, but they soon grew accustomed to the glare. He counted the small drawers lining the wall to the left; he counted them up; he counted them down; he counted them diagonally; he added the results together, and then made a mental calculation of the square of the whole number; he directed his attention to the adjustable tray of instruments at his side and named them all in his mind; he examined minutely every joint and feature of the automatic boring machine. Then he followed with keen observation the wanderings of a Bohemian blue-bottle that vainly strove to brave the light without scorching its gauzy wings. The buzzing accompaniment to its dizzy dance was a welcome sound in the silent room, and when at last, in the pride of its invincibility, it deliberately waltzed into the centre of the burning flame, and with one explosive buzz fell to the ground and gave up the ghost, Marshall felt as if his only friend had forsaken him.

The window facing him looked over the roof of a low adjacent house, but owing to the gas-light inside, the only object he could see distinctly was his own reflection. This duplicate of himself afforded him some small consolation; it was a kind of companion in his loneliness, though he grimly speculated as to what Olga would say or think if she saw him cut such a sorry figure as this temporary mirror betrayed. It was midnight before he awakened to the fact that a small clock was ticking somewhere in the room. By screwing his head round till it gave him a crick in the neck he discovered its position on a wall-bracket. He groaned when he saw that the hands pointed to half-past twelve. Those hours already passed had dragged so painfully through every minute of their course that he had imagined it was nearly morning. Olga—Olga—Olga became again his only thought. His apathy flew, and despair, deep and tragic, took its place. What was his wife doing? How would she act under this unparalleled trial?

Two big, scalding tears gathered under his closed eyelids as he pictured her crying and wringing her hands—those pretty little hands he loved to kiss and caress. Then he saw her pale, indignant, insulted at this incomprehensible desertion; he imagined her frightened, starting at every sound, dreading to go out alone in the strange city, feeling herself forsaken, outraged, disgraced. At these terrible mental visions the strong man moaned and writhed. Drops of water stood out on his forehead, his head seemed to swell, and a singular feeling compressed his chest and hindered his breathing. Then everything became blurred and indistinct. The next moment he had fainted and become mercifully oblivious to the reality of his miserable situation.

He must have passed from this state to one of unconscious slumber, because when he opened his eyes again the gray dawn was creeping in at the window, making the gas-light change to a pale and sickly hue, and bringing out, in dim, shadowy outline, the roofs and chimneys of the surrounding houses. He was aching in every limb; stinging pains shot through his arms and up his legs; his jaws were numb and stiff; his throat was parched and swollen. He looked round at the clock; it was six o'clock. Thank God! the night was over. With the breaking of another day, hope rose glimmering in his heart. He ran over in his mind all the possibilities of escape during the day: the assistant might return on some errand; the gas would be seen burning through the transom should any one approach the room; his friend might return to the hotel, hear of his strange disappearance, and give some clue to the mystery.

That lifeless form on the floor had no terror for him, fortunately, and unless he moved his head and looked right down he could not see it. It was an awful death, he thought, and what if he should die, too, and never meet his wife again—never explain what had happened! How it was his brain did not give way through that fearful ordeal he never knew. Hour after hour passed in sickening, agonizing suspense. The tortures of waiting, the faintness of hunger, the compulsory, strained position of his body, combined to overcome and under-

mine his physical strength, and finally deprive him of all feeling of consciousness.

A stinging, flaming sensation suddenly gathered the scattered embers of his half-extinguished senses together, and caused them to emit a small flicker of stirring, glimmering vitality. The heat increased until he was sufficiently restored to locate the sensation. It was in his throat, which was on fire. Molten lead seemed to be trickling down, drop by drop. By dint of oft-renewed efforts he slowly opened his eyes. Where was he? Was this death or life? A strange face was bending over him. He tried to move, and to his great joy found that his limbs were free, and the magnitude of that emotion made him half lose consciousness again.

Deliverance, though tardy, had really come at last. The double tragedy slowly developing within those four walls had been averted by the timely entrance of the janitor of the building, who had come in to prepare the room for the business of the week. The horror-stricken man had had presence of mind to release Marshall from the fatal chair, drag him to a lounge, and then rush off for a doctor. Brandy, used as the speediest, readiest restorative, had brought him to his senses, under the impression that his throat was on fire. A very few words explained the situation, a coupé was summoned, and with the doctor's aid he regained the hotel exactly twenty-four hours after he had left it for "only ten minutes." The anxiety with which he had mentally followed Olga's probable treatment of his peculiar actions prepared him for her flight. Exhaustion, apart from the fact that the last Sunday train had already gone, checked his first wild impulse of instantaneous pursuit.

However, the first train speeding northward on Monday morning carried with it not only the city papers with the thrilling account of the dentist's sudden death and harrowing sufferings of his unlucky patient, but also the chief hero of the drama himself. How will he fare at his wife's hands? Ask yourself what you would do under similar strange circumstances, and then you will know.

The story of a man who loved and suffered—that is, of a hero. Like many another hero, his origin was obscure and his early years were unpromising. This sketch of his life was written for the *Overland Monthly* by Margaret Sutton Briscoe.

NED.

"AND so, dear, you have decided to name the baby Ned! Was Fred quite willing?"

"It was his own suggestion. Please like it, Elizabeth."

"I do like it, little one; I love it; and I love Fred for suggesting it."

As I stood looking at the pretty maternal picture of my sister Barbara adoring her first-born, my heart was full of thankfulness and my eyes wet with tears. "Ah, my little man," I said, stooping to kiss the tiny scrap of humanity, "if you are brought up as I think you will be, you will be more proud of your first name than of your last. How you came by it is almost like a story."

And then I suddenly thought that perhaps it was a story, so here it is.

"Blessed is the man that hath his quiver full of them," saith the Psalmist, and I think that even had my father been less happy in his family relations, he would have striven to feel "blessed," in order to fulfil the Scriptures. For there were twelve of us, all high-spirited and running over with mischief. I, Elizabeth, was the eldest daughter, and Barbara, who was ten years younger, the most beautiful and the favorite.

Why none of us were jealous of Barbara, I am sure I do not know. Perhaps it was because we all united in spoiling her. She was the only delicate baby my mother ever had, and this naturally caused a difference in the beginning. But had it not been this, some other reason would have presented itself. That old woman was a deep philosopher who said of her unmarried sisters:

"It ain't never that there be no men about—it's the winnin' ways as is wantin' in the gals."

Winning ways were not lacking in Barbara's case, and as child and woman she was most perfectly beautiful in face and form. Some few, who had not fallen under the witchery of her personality, maintained that she was too small, too fairy-like—that the soft golden hair was too fluffy and luxuriant.

Small Barbara might be, but the erect little body was storage-house for a spirit and fire sufficient for a dozen ordinary mortals. Her pretty, imperious ways gained for her the title of "Princess" with father and the boys. My mother disliked the name, thinking it not good for Barbara, and we girls never used it, for quite another reason. It was our small and only stand against the absolute monarchy.

But when she was about four years old another subject was added to Barbara's list—one who was to outstrip all others in loyal devotion, and this was Ned—black, savage, untamable Ned.

His mother was a full-blooded African who had been purchased by our uncle, the owner of a large plantation in Virginia. He bought her with her baby in her arms, out of pure compassion, he said; for she was as untamed as a savage and evidently untamable—utterly useless to her Florida master, who was trying to subdue her by methods of which we were spared the recital. But the change of masters came to her too late. Though her spirit was unbroken, it was so bruised and festering as to render her death no surprise when it occurred some months later.

The child, whose name was Ned, was brought up in the quarters with the other negro children. He developed early a wild and lawless spirit, and when he was put into the field to work the overseer complained constantly that he was a leader among the slaves and thoroughly insubordinate. My uncle's attention thus called in his direction, he found Ned a man of twenty-two years, superbly built, and apparently as much of a savage as his mother.

Remembering her history, my uncle determined to make no attempt to break the lad's spirit. He wrote at once to my mother, telling her the whole story and saying that as he found Ned responded to kindness, he felt sure there was the making of a magnificent servant

in him. He ended by begging my mother to accept him and give him the individual attention that his bachelor home could not afford, adding that if the boy proved too much for her he could be returned.

Mother and father talked the matter over, and the end of it was Ned came. He was almost a giant, quite six feet four, but too perfectly proportioned to show his full height, and lithe and active as a panther.

Mother decided to train him as a waiter. He learned rapidly, and though at first he lifted barrels of flour with ease and trembled under a glass of water, he soon waited with a really stately elegance. The strangeness of the new home and surroundings kept the old lawless spirit in check; but familiarity bred the usual contempt, and in a few weeks Ned was king of the kitchen, as absolutely as he had been king of the Virginia plantation.

Possibly this spirit was an inheritance; undoubtedly his appearance bore out the supposition, and perhaps from the same source sprang the wild gusts of rage which seemed to possess him and sweep him along resistlessly. Mother remonstrated gently, then sternly and repeatedly, all in vain.

Pandemonium seemed to have broken loose in the regions below stairs. Early one morning the climax came. An uproar such as never was heard before rose from the kitchen, causing my father's hasty appearance there for the first time in many years. Huddled in one corner were the frightened negroes, and in the centre of the room towered Ned, holding the group in subjection. Some trifle had irritated him and this was the consequence.

Father was beyond measure angry—so angry that Ned's rage paled before his. He told the rather sobered negro that he would stand no more. Kindness had failed with him, and he should now have the whipping he richly deserved.

"Not to be given by me, however," he added. "The constable shall do it, and I mean to send for him to take you away at once."

So saying, my father left the house in a white heat. But he was unused to interfering in what he considered his wife's department, and was also a man of quick

wrath and quicker forgetfulness; so, becoming absorbed in important matters of business, he spent no further thought on Ned or his misconduct.

It was not thus at home. So severe a measure had never before been resorted to, and we were all unhappy. Mother alone, and probably because she knew what manner of man our father was, remained as placid as ever as she sat in the nursery sewing.

But her placidity was to be rudely interrupted. There was a sudden patter of feet in the hall, a scramble up the stairway, and Aunt Tilly, the black cook and whilom ruler of the kitchen, rushed into the room.

"Dat nigger gwine to kill somebody yit!" she wailed. "He done shet hisse'f up in de garret wid de meat-axe and ole marse's razor, an' he got all de knives what he wor a-cleanin', an' he say dar sha'n' be no po' white trash sont fer to whip him; dat he gwine ter kill de fust pusson dat set foot over de do' sill."

Two bright, hard spots of color rose in my mother's cheeks as she listened, but her manner was unhurried as she quilted her needle into her work and shook off the threads from her dress into the open fireplace. With her usual even pace she walked out of the room and up the stairway, we children, with the servants who had gathered in the hall, stringing after her. On she went to the partially-closed garret door. There she paused.

"Ned!"

There was no answer.

Raising her hand, my mother struck the door lightly with her palm, throwing it wide open and disclosing Ned, who stood before it. All the savage was up and looking out of the dark, scowling face, the bloodshot eyes, the drawn lips. His body was thrown back, and in one hand, raised above his head, he held the axe. In the other flashed the razor.

The servants crowded behind each other with smothered cries, but mother, with her beautiful proud head thrown back, stepped over the threshold. She was slightly and delicately made, yet as she stood opposite the huge negro, her figure drawn up to its full height, her cheeks brilliant, her eyes flashing defiance into his, she rose above the question of brawn and

muscle, to become his full equal in power, but no more.

The inflexible blue eyes and the passionate black ones looked unflinchingly into each other for what seemed to me an age. And then suddenly my mother's whole figure seemed to relax. The scornful, curling lips half smiled. The blue eyes looked infinitely soft and pitying. She stepped swiftly to Ned's side and laid her gentle hand on his shoulder. "You poor boy," she said softly, "why will you do so?"

Wonder drove passion from the dark face—wonder held Ned spell-bound as my mother took the weapons from his unresisting hands. But when she bade him return to his work he seemed to awake, and darting a furious glance around, he rushed headlong from the room and down the stairs. But then something happened which I cannot think of even now without a darting sense of horror. Half way up the stairs stood little Barbara. Her nurse had deserted her and she was following after.

Spreading out her tiny arms, she blocked Ned's way.

"You is dot to tarry me down 'tairs," she cried in her sweet treble. "I hurted my foot and I aren't a-doin' to walk."

Ned stopped and hesitated. I sprang forward, but mother, her face as pale as her kerchief, held my arm in an iron grasp. I turned sick and faint; everything swam before my eyes, and when I could see again it was a strange sight that awaited me. Barbara was sitting high in Ned's arms, singing a little tune to herself, and beating time on his woolly head.

He carried her down the stairs, straight to the wood-room, where they spent the rest of the morning. One minute Ned was sawing wood furiously, and the next he was sitting with Barbara on his knee, delighting her heart by strange stories and games. Mother made me peep in occasionally, but would not allow them to be disturbed.

"The child is doing him good," she said.

At last the nursery door opened softly, and Ned entered with Barbara cradled in his arm sound asleep.

He laid her in the crib, covering her carefully, ten-

derly soothing her when she half woke, and then left the room with noiseless step.

The battle was over. Ned had found his master, and that master was a baby.

There was never any real trouble with Ned after this. He now had a motive for good behavior, and lived in deadly fear of being sent back to Virginia, away from "de fiddle-string of his heart, Miss Princess."

When he felt his old rages coming on he used simply to depart—where, we never knew. Sometimes he was gone for one day, sometimes for two. My mother wisely forebore asking questions, and when we children did so he would invariably reply gravely: "I was sont fur suddint to go to the Islant of Dardanelles fer to wait on my Lord Concarson."

Barbara never had one atom of curiosity, so she never inquired unless we put her up to it, but even then we got no satisfaction. Ned would pick her up and carry her off, saying:

"Yes, honey, Ned's gwine to tell Miss Princess all 'bout it—jes' you come wid me."

But on her return we could never gather that she knew any more than we did. Barbara was so easily distracted and so lacking in any desire for knowledge.

In one respect Ned was very considerate. He never disappeared if guests were expected, and on one occasion he even returned hastily on remembering a dinner party! "Jes' s'pose I hed 'a' gone on disrememberin' dis here party," I heard him say to Aunt Tilly. "Dere ain't one o' you niggers as knows even to set de table, an' when it comes to waitin'—Lord! I jes' run back like a har' soon as I come to think 'bout it. I ain't stop to take breff."

But these departures became less and less frequent as his adoration of Barbara grew stronger.

It was a strange sight to see the two together. Barbara's manner was as if graciously permitting affection, while Ned's was that of actual worship. Her first remark on seeing him was always, "I wants to be tarried;" and Ned knew no higher happiness than holding her curled up in his great arms.

I think she enjoyed the sense of his powerful

strength. A great deal of his work was done thus encumbered, but as Ned could set a table better with one hand than any one else with two, he was allowed to do as he chose.

He was Barbara's willing slave, a slave whom no emancipation act could liberate, though Ned himself was a great abolitionist and fond of making speeches upon the subject in the kitchen. My father had some misgivings about slaveholding also, and I think Ned divined the truth when he said:

"Ole mass', he done give Aunt Tilly her freedom fer a Christmas gif'. I guess his conscience been a-bearin' down on him."

But however undecided were my father's politics, Ned's opinions were very definitely settled; and yet one small incident that occurred in the first year of our civil war was to make him bitterly opposed to all that he had previously held dear.

When the war broke out Barbara was eight years old and was going to school with me. I was to leave at the end of the year. Our city was on the border line and constantly full of soldiers; so my mother preferred to send Ned to and from school with us. But one day we were dismissed a few minutes earlier than usual, and I started home alone with my little sister.

When only a square from our door we met a Union soldier walking toward us. He looked admiringly at Barbara and then stopped.

"Will you give me a kiss, my pretty bird?" he said.

She shrank to my side, speechless with terror. I do not believe the man meant to frighten her. He was a mild-looking little fellow, and probably had children of his own at home, but he stooped and lifted Barbara high in the air to steal the wished-for kiss.

But that kiss he never got; for she was suddenly seized and whisked out of his hands and over his head, to his infinite astonishment. Ned was on the way to meet us and had flown to the rescue.

It was well for the little soldier, and perhaps well for Ned also, that Barbara required all of her faithful servant's soothing and attention. But from that moment Ned's horror of "dem Yanks" knew no bounds, and hatred of them included a hatred of their princi-

ples. His speeches in the kitchen veered in doctrine with an alarming suddenness.

He had things his own way, as usual, for the men were afraid of him and the maids admired him. Aunt Tilly alone spoke her mind, and I heard her do it from my up-stairs window.

"You was a-talkin' de oder side of yer mouf," she said as she hopped up and down in her vain endeavor to throw a dripping sheet over the high clothes-line in the yard. "You was a-sayin' dere warn't no right in a-holdin' de slaves."

Ned took the sheet from her with a contemptuous kindness and slung it over the line.

"Dat was before I knowed," he answered coolly; and then, emphasizing his remark by driving down the clothes-pins, he added impressively, "Dat's what niggers was made fer."

The year 1865 was soon to prove that Ned and many others were mistaken. But we children cared little for this or anything else that did not directly concern us, and so the years of childhood slipped away with only enough shadow about them to throw out the sunlight more strongly; and when Barbara's seventeenth birthday came, it was to find us children yet in many ways. Barbara was still the "Princess," but Ned was, if possible, more than ever her captive. The great change was that Barbara was engaged to be married—and engaged to a Northerner who had lately settled among us—a Mr. Fred Damer, soon known to all of us as Fred; for formality was not possible with one of his sunny nature and kind heart.

Except for her extreme youth, I think we all were satisfied with Barbara's engagement, Ned alone excepted. That Barbara should marry anybody was bad enough, but that she should marry one of "dem Yanks" was intolerable.

He waited on Fred at table with undisguised disgust, muttering and shaking his head behind his back at every opportunity; invariably beginning to wait on him from the right side, and just as Fred adjusted himself to the awkwardness, rushing around to the left. It really amounted to a petty persecution, which kept the children in delighted spasms of laughter and me in

misery. My mother could not see from behind her tea-urn what was going on, and father never saw or heard anything. But at last Ned undertook to slap down as a gauntlet each plate and dish before his foe, and his mutterings began to grow audible. One day, on seeing Fred pay some little attention to mother, he spoke too loud for further ignoring.

"I sees yer, I sees yer, 'deed I does. Throwin' cobs at de cow, is yer? Yes, to make de ca'f take notice. Yer don't git dis yer ca'f, ef Ned kin help it—naw, sir."

This was too much. My patience was exhausted and I complained to father.

At the next meal my remonstrance took effect. Just as Ned was indulging in an unusually horrible contortion of his visage, and as my delighted brother John was stuffing all of his handkerchief into his mouth, my father looked up suddenly and bent his white brows on Ned until they met in a straight line over his blue eyes. Thus he continued to gaze at him until the embarrassed negro managed to get himself out of the room. Then, turning to the now sober John, father significantly motioned to the door, through which the scared boy escaped, glad to get off so easily.

My father never used unnecessary words, and as he knew none were needed to meet this occasion, none were said, and at least outward peace reigned until the inevitable first lover's quarrel arose. Then Ned was one broad grin. He seemed to scent danger for the hated intruder, and he hung about Barbara, perfectly happy in the fact that she, as in her childish troubles, seemed to prefer his constant attendance to anything else.

I was never quite able to make out what this quarrel was about, though it lasted several days, but it was not difficult to see that Barbara was behaving like the spoiled baby she was, and that Fred was very patient, more patient than I for him, for at last, finding Barbara alone in the library, I administered the good round scolding that I thought she needed. Unused as she was to any harshness, it did not take long to reduce her to floods of tears, and she was sobbing her heart out, apparently, when Fred entered the room.

As I closed the library door behind me two minutes

after his entrance, it was with the fixed opinion, which I have seen no reason to alter since, that the male or female who attempts to interfere with even the potentially married is a fool. What conclusions the lovers came to in their prolonged reconciliation I do not know. When we all met in the drawing-room in the evening Barbara appeared her old bewitching self, supremely happy and contented. What arguments had been used to work the change I never asked, and Barbara never told me. However it may have been, the result was satisfactory.

Fred was a trifle more communicative, but indirectly. Taking me into a corner later in the evening, he gavely inquired if I thought my father would object to his taking Ned out into the yard and wringing his neck.

"If he did not, Barbara would," I replied. "What has poor Ned been doing now?"

"Poor Ned, indeed! He has been abusing me as usual. I was at my innocent devotions this afternoon, worshipping at my shrine in the attitude common to worshippers of every faith and clime, when he attacked me. Elizabeth, being behind the scenes, why did you not intercept the afternoon tea-tray brought in by Ned with catlike steps and handed to Barbara over my devoted head and prostrate form? I had two horrible alternatives: to rise suddenly to my feet, thereby upsetting the tray and all its contents, or to crab out sidewise. I chose the latter, and even as I emerged was offered tea by my tormentor with respectful gravity."

"What did Barbara do?" I asked, laughing heartily.

"Why, Barbara came to my rescue nobly. She reproved Ned scathingly and with the air of an insulted princess for putting only one lump of sugar in her tea —I think that was it."

"Reproved Ned! and before you!" I cried. "Then, indeed, she punished him. The jealous hatred he bears you is beyond words. My impression is that he is not going to put up with your presence much longer. I have been for some time expecting a message for Ned from Lord Concarson necessitating a voyage to the Island of the Dardanelles."

"Not he!" cried Fred. "No such luck for poor me!"

I was nearer right than I thought. The next morning brought with it the news that Ned was off again, and with no farewell message except a box of dainty candies tied to Barbara's door-knob.

We thought a couple of days at most would see Ned in his place again. But no—Barbara had gone over to the enemy; his own eyes had seen incontestible proof of a complete reconciliation. It was not to be borne, and shaking the dust from his feet, Ned departed in earnest.

Perhaps it was for the best. Barbara missed him sadly and grieved long over his absence, repenting often her hasty words. But as the days went by she grew more and more absorbed in her lover, and I do not think Ned's jealous heart could have borne the sight. And when Barbara's wedding-day came and our clinging little Princess was taken from us, I thought of Ned and rejoiced in his absence, believing that his undisciplined nature would have suffered a pang ten times sharper than mine.

But Barbara had not seen her faithful servant for the last time. She was soon to meet him again. And of this meeting I have heard the story so often that it has grown impossible for me to feel that I was not there in person, so I shall tell it as if such were the fact.

Fred and Barbara seemed inclined to spend the rest of their lives in one prolonged wedding journey. Every day they determined to set their face toward home to-morrow, and each to-morrow found them lingering. Drifting about in this way, they strolled one noon into the dining-room of a New York hotel and sat awaiting their luncheon. The waiters were all negroes, and as Barbara idly looked at them, thinking how natural their dusky faces appeared to her Southern eyes, her attention was caught by something familiar in the figure of the head waiter, whose back was toward her. Suddenly he turned, and Ned and his "Miss Princess" were face to face.

In the joy of that meeting, even the man who had stolen his treasure was forgiven. He had no words too eloquent to express his passionate delight, no entreaties too urgent to implore their stay. The best that the hotel could offer was theirs, and no hands but

Ned's were allowed to proffer the dishes. Barbara's happiness was but little less than his, and when they left the dining-room after the prolonged meal, it was with the promise to make their stay an extended one. With this understanding, Ned bade them a reluctant farewell for the afternoon.

But in an hour or so a message was brought to him that Mrs. Damer wished to see him in her sitting-room. He found her alone, lying in a corner of the low divan, looking pale and suffering.

"Ah, Ned," she cried as he entered, "my head does ache so! I have been to see Aunt Mary, and she keeps her house as hot here as she did when she lived at home. It made me so ill—just as it used to!"

Ned was all tender sympathy. She was his little mistress once more and he was her great, gentle nurse. He brought her a cup of strong tea made by his own hands. Had she asked for nightingales' tongues he would have produced them somehow. Barbara sipped the fragrant tea and listened to the familiar voice contentedly.

"Ned," she said, looking up at him suddenly, "why did you run away?"

For a moment Ned's composure failed him and his eyes dropped. Then a smile crept over his face.

"Yer see, honey," he said, "I was jest 'bleeged to go. My Lord Concarson, he don' sen' fer dis nigger deep in de night an' all de way from de Islant of Dardanelles, lessen he means business. I didn't even have de time fer to say good-by to my pretty baby."

Barbara listened with soft laughter.

"Ned," she said, "tell me about the Island of Dardanelles."

Ned obediently began a long fallacious tale of a lovely, lonely land, a land of tropic growth and splendor. The story was such as he had told Barbara over and over again in her baby days. Gradually her eyelids sleepily drooped and fell; opened, drooped again, and then, under the spell of the familiar phrases, she fell asleep.

* * * * * *

"Fire! Fire!"

The dining-room of the hotel, where Ned was in

charge, was somewhat apart from the rest of the building; so this probably was the last place where the alarm of fire was heard when it broke out in the hotel, not an hour after Ned had left Barbara's side. His first thought was for her safety, and he rushed from the dining-room, through the hall and up the main stairway which led to her rooms.

The hallways were full of screaming women and children, and were thick with smoke. Great clouds were rolling in from every side. On the first landing Ned met Barbara's husband, a baby in either arm, and a half-fainting woman clinging to his shoulder.

"Miss Barbara!" gasped Ned.

"Safe," was the laconic answer as Fred bundled the babies into Ned's arms and caught the tottering woman.

The fire had been smouldering too long before being discovered to think of saving much more than human life now that the flames had broken out, and it required brave and determined efforts to accomplish even this. At last the order was issued by the captain of the fire brigade that no one should further risk life and limb by re-entering the doomed building. Ned had been foremost among the workers, and he now prepared to enjoy himself.

An African is always a voluptuary in his pleasures, and abandoning himself with true negro delight to the sway of excitement, Ned drifted about with the seething and twisting of the crowd, until he found himself standing close by Fred's side. He then resisted the pressure which was bearing him forward and spoke reproachfully. "I jes' hope you got Miss Princess a-lookin' at dis yer fire from somewhar. She allays did love a fire. Many's de one I done tuk her toe outen de back gate, when ole Miss think she war in de nuss'ry an' I war in de woodhus. Thar warn't none on it she didn't see a-settin' up on my shoulder an' crowin' like a little rooster. Ole Miss, she cot me takin' her out onct; Lord, but she did raise! I disremember jes' what she tol' me, but I know I ain't tuk de chile no mo'. Ho! ho!"

Fred listened with much amusement.

"I am afraid your Miss Barbara cannot see this fire

from where she is," he said. "I took her across the city early this afternoon to visit her aunt. It is not my fault that she is not with me. They didn't want me, and told me so."

"An' yer ain't seen Miss Barbara sence de fire broke out?"

"No—for God's sake, man, what is the matter with you?"

The two faces looked into each other—a strange contrast. One with staring white eyeballs and eyes full of a horrible intelligence—the other white and ghastly with its dawning terror.

No further words were needed. Both men turned and sprang forward as moved by one muscle. But the action of the negro was with hand and foot. A well-directed blow from his ponderous fist made the husband of his young mistress stagger, and when he recovered his footing Ned had gained the moment's advantage and was cleaving his way through the crowd, which opened for him as did the Red Sea for Moses—"a wall on the right hand and on the left."

As he reached the door of the burning building his path was barred by a fireman in his full panoply and power of office.

"Git out, ye black fool!" he shouted in unmistakable Irish.

Out swept that powerful black arm, and with what seemed but a gesture the burly Irishman was brushed aside. The next moment Ned was up the deserted stairway and had gained the first landing. Here he paused. There was no one now to bar his progress but death, clad in his most fearful terrors.

The negro stooped and began to draw off his boots.

The stairway hung by a thread and his step must be cat-like. He cast one look back into the surging mass of life below, and saw there a man struggling vainly in the grasp of a dozen hands. He heard a hoarse voice crying:

"Curse you! let me go! My wife is in that hell!"

Above the roar of the fire, above the shout of many voices, rose the stentorian tones of the captain of the brigade.

"Hold on to him, boys, hold on to him. There's one

chance in a hundred, and that hangs on those steps. There shan't be a foot set on 'em."

Ned heard, saw, and was satisfied that the first part of his mission was accomplished. He set his bared foot on the charred steps and began the ascent, the first turn hiding him from the eyes of the crowd below.

A death-like silence fell on the multitude, a silence rendering more horribly audible the resistless, sullen roar of the fire, which licked and curled about the eaves of the house and which the hissing water seemed but to feed. Great tongues of flame broke from one window and another. A woman's hysterical sobs alone broke the stillness, and she was sternly hushed.

Barbara's husband ceased to struggle in the firemen's grasp.

Have you ever known what waiting means—known more than its impatient restlessness? Have you ever felt that stopping of the heart's pulses for one moment of anxious listening, and then at some sound the wild rush and thunder of the blood in your veins, the agony of the clutch at your very life and being, your breath stopped in your throat? If you have never known all this, you have never known waiting, and you may pray heaven to spare you that knowledge. This suffering and this knowledge are Frederick Damer's.

Crash!

A cry rose from the listening crowd in answer to the sound, and the woman who had sobbed before was carried away fainting.

"Thank God, it's only the lower stairway gone," said the captain. "The landing still holds. I can reach it with a ladder. Get me one."

"I'll go with you," said a quiet, determined voice beside him. It was Barbara's husband.

The captain turned and looked at him closely; apparently what he saw satisfied him.

"Yes, sir," he answered calmly. "Give him your helmet, Jack. We must go now, sir. I hear them on the stair."

They entered the burning house together. At any moment the roof might fall. Four lives were now in jeopardy where two had stood before. The sound of a footfall slowly became an established fact.

"That ain't but one person walking, sir," said the captain gently, "and you'd best not hope, for that foot's bare."

"Then he is carrying her," said Fred, and again nothing but the dread fire sounds and that stealthy footfall broke the silence.

At last! at last! Out of the smoke, out of the flame, on to the frail platform, stepped the gigantic negro, his clothes literally torn and burned from his body; the blood streaming from a ghastly wound in his head; his breath coming in sobs like those of a wounded stag; but in his arms, gathered close to his breast, her fair curls gleaming in its blackness, lay the unconscious form of his Miss Barbara.

Once more he was carrying her safely home from a fire, and now, indeed, for the last time. By the help of the two waiting men the descent of the ladder was made, and Barbara lay in her husband's arms. Even at this supreme moment, he observed with a rush of grateful emotion that the blanket in which she was swathed had been saturated in water.

As the rescuer and the rescued passed out from the blazing house, a wild shout burst from the excited crowd, which pressed forward beyond control. But even as his dimmed sense heard the cries as the blessed air of heaven smote upon him, Ned staggered and dropped to the ground. The blood gushed out from his ears and mouth. He was picked up by strong hands and carried into a neighboring house, where at least there were quiet and care.

In another room in the same building Barbara lay, still unconscious; but the swoon caused by fright and shock soon yielded to treatment, and she awoke, crying hysterically for "mother!" and clinging nervously to her husband.

But her first fully conscious thought was for Ned. Fred could not command his voice to answer her eager, persistent questions, and it was the physician in charge who gently broke to her the news of his danger, and who left her in order to seek the latest report of his condition.

In these few moments, alone with the wife "brought to him like Alcestis from the grave," I think we may

forgive a brief forgetfulness of the Hercules whose gift she was; but it was with a sense of remorseful awakening that Fred looked at the grave face of the physician as he entered, saying, "I can give you but little encouragement."

"Oh, no! no!" cried Barbara. "You can, you must save him! Go to him, both of you. I promise to be perfectly quiet. I won't move—only go, oh, go!"

As the door closed behind the two men, Fred turned to the physician with an inquiring look, and was answered by a shrug of the shoulders and an outward motion of the hands, more expressive than any words. Everything that skill could do had been done, but from the first it needed no medical verdict to tell that there was no hope.

Ned did not seem to suffer, but lay almost unconscious, breathing heavily. Fred, bending over him in an agony of grateful pity, saw his lips move, and bending nearer, thought he heard him whisper, "Miss Princess."

"Shall I bring her to you?" he asked, and waiting for no answer, went hastily for his wife.

She started up with eager eyes as he entered. "Is there no hope?" she cried.

"There has been none from the first," he answered. "Dear, he is asking for you. Can you bear it? There is not a moment to lose."

"Oh, take me to him quickly, quickly."

He lifted her tenderly, and half-led, half-carried her to the room of the dying man. But in his short absence there had been a change in the sufferer. Agony had partially restored consciousness, and each breath was a moan.

"Come, Lord, come! Oh, Lord, come git me!" he was crying feebly as they entered the room.

"Love, it is too late. You may not stay now, nor would he wish it."

But Barbara broke from her husband's detaining arm and threw herself on her knees by the bedside.

Her presence seemed to rouse him. He opened his eyes and looked at her tearful face. "'Tain't so terrible bad, darlin'," he gasped brokenly. "I ain't

a-cryin' none—jis' whisperin' to de Lord, jis' whisperin' to de Lord."

Barbara buried her face in the bedside and burst into a passion of tears. Her husband stepped forward to draw her away, fearing that she might disturb the dying man, but Ned seemed to divine his intention and, rallying his strength, laid a detaining hand on her sunny curls, raising her face to his sight.

"Don' take on so, darlin'," he whispered. "I's got to go; but I ain't goin' fur, honey, not to say fur." A gleam of the old humor shot across his face. "Ned only gwine to de Islant of Dardanelles, honey, fer to wait on my Lord Con——"

A sudden shudder shook his whole frame; his face was contorted in agony. Barbara's husband laid his hand quickly across her eyes to shut out the sight.

And when he drew it away again all was over. Ned had at last made his voyage to the Blessed Isles, and was waiting upon his Lord—whose name was not Concarson.

There is, when we get below the surface, a good deal of the brute in all men. This man, whose story is written for ROMANCE by Daniel Dane, had little of the varnish of conventionality, and so his brutish qualities are clearly revealed. And so this victim of his own passions and of his bringing up—or want of it—becomes the central figure of Mr. Dane's sketch. But what can you expect of the man whom his fellows have dubbed "Black Jake?"

JAKE MURPHY'S REVENGE.

BLACK JAKE MURPHY was the bigger, but it did not take longer than five minutes to determine who was the better man. Even Mike Hudok, the big Polander, saw it. He was viewing the fray from an upturned beer keg in front of Yankee Pete's saloon.

"Jim lick 'um, dam quick," he ejaculated, and his words were prophetic. In less than ten minutes Black Jake was thoroughly and scientifically "licked," and he knew it. He would have fallen on his face again as he staggered up after the last knock-down blow, if some one had not given him an arm to lean on. Through the blood that blinded him he saw the crowd in a red haze. But his reeling sight looked for but one object, and his whole brain and soul were filled with a fierce and devilish hatred for the man who stood near with bruised face and bared arms—his conqueror.

Slocum's Patch had no sympathy for Black Jake Murphy. As a rule, the Patch displayed no excessive fastidiousness as to the component parts of its select society. It had even got beyond objecting to the Polander and Hungarian. But with Jake Murphy and his father it refused to associate on any terms more friendly than those involved in imbibing Yankee Pete's whiskey at their expense. It could not be asserted that either father or son were at all discomposed by this partial ostracism. It rather seemed to suit their sullen and morose dispositions. They did not seek the allurements of Slocum Patch society, except on the rather rare occasions when together they sat down for a drinking bout at Yankee Pete's. Then all who chose could drink at their expense, and then for the few

hours their money lasted none were more popular. Yankee Pete did a land office business and could well afford the broken chairs and windows which usually ornamented his groggery the next morning.

Black Jake said no word as he turned from the fray a beaten man and staggered off toward his home. It was a rough cabin of battened hemlock boards. The two men had built it themselves on a strip of company land up on the hillside above the Patch. They lived there alone, and from one year's end to another no one else crossed its threshold. Around it, in summer, the soft breeze murmured among the scraggy hemlocks and oaks. The wild violet and honeysuckle gave out their fragrance. From its door the great Wyoming Valley stretched away as in a panorama. Pitville's many spires rose not four miles away, and on a still Sunday morning the distant chime of its bells was borne to the ear. Half a mile distant rose the massive timbers that marked the opening of the new Woodford shaft, the biggest and deepest in all that region; where 1,200 feet below the sinkers had just struck the red ash vein and were finishing their contract.

The old man smoking his pipe on his doorstep made no comment as his son washed the blood from his face at the little spring near the door. At last he said:

"Who've yer been lickin' now?"

"No one," growled his son; "curse him, he licked me."

The old man gave a grunt.

"Who was it?" he asked.

"Jim Carroll."

"Sarve yer right. I told yer ter quit foolin' round his gal. Easy nuff ter see she thought more o' his little finger than o' yer whole carcass."

"God strike me dead ef I don't have his life."

It was a bitter threat that Black Jake made, and the deadly hate that filled his heart made it no idle one.

* * * * * *

It was midnight, but down in the shaft midnight and midday were the same. Looking up, a faint speck of white could be seen in the daytime, but no trace of light penetrated that awful depth. Three men stood there, waiting for their turn to go up. The smoky

lamps stuck in their oilskin caps threw a dull and flickering light over their faces and figures, wrapped to the chin in waterproofs. They stood in water almost to the knee, and the ceaseless splash and patter of the falling drops told where it came from. Thirty feet above them, on a platform protected by heavy timbers, a powerful pump made the confined air throb with the heavy plunk, plunk of its stroke. The pump runner sat there motionless, smoking. It was old Murphy, Black Jake's father. Jake himself stood below, and one of the two with him was Jim Carroll.

There was a fierce and evil look in Black Jake's eyes as they stood silently waiting for the bucket to descend. That look had never left him since the day Jim Carroll had "licked" him for being too attentive to his sweetheart. Black Jake was not the man to forgive or forget, and the bitterness of defeat was made still more bitter by disappointed love. He was a rough and sullen man, but years ago he had set his heart upon that girl, before Jim Carroll ever knew her. But she was young and he not over-confident. He had waited and waited too long, for Jim Carroll stepped in, and now they were to be married. Black Jake set his teeth and breathed hard when he heard it. He said nothing, but his old father watching him knew that Carroll's life was in danger. Considered from an abstract point of view, the old man had no particular objection to his son putting Carroll out of the way, but some strange and deep-hidden bond held these two men together. Had such a possibility ever arisen, old Murphy would readily have laid down his own life to save that of his son. He watched him then lest he should do that which might necessitate his departure from this world at the hands of the sheriff. His watching brought him great uneasiness. Black Jake was changed. He did not seek an opportunity to revenge his defeat in open fight. Rather he avoided Carroll, and when they were together, and, working in the same shaft, they could not keep apart, he was quiet and fair-spoken. This was not Black Jake's nature and the old man feared for what was to come.

Sitting at his post, looking down at the three men below him, old Murphy, in the flickering light of the

miners' lamps, caught a glimpse of his son's face and a terror fell on him. Something told him in those set and sullen features and eyes that seemed to burn with inward fire that the time had come.

With a rattle and rush the heavy iron bucket plunged down through the darkness and touched the water ere it stopped, slowly turning with the twist of the rope that, like a thin line of black, disappeared in the blackness above.

Jake Murphy gripped it and sprang inside. Only two men could go up in it at once.

"Come, Jim," he cried, "get in," and looked at Carroll.

Old Murphy's tongue was loosened. "Hold on, Jim," he called out. "I want yer to help me fix this valve afore yer go up."

Jim turned irresolute. In that moment the other man jumped in the bucket.

"All right!" he cried. "Let 'er go!"

Carroll saw that the bucket was filled. He must wait, and grasping the lever he gave the signal to the engineer on top. There was a moment's pause, and then, with a strong and sudden rush, the bucket and its occupants vanished in the darkness.

On top it was a calm, still summer night. Above the heads of the two men as they stepped out of the swinging bucket rose the framework of massive timbers that supported the huge sheave wheels. Twenty yards away stood the engine-house, the steam still curling from the exhaust-pipes. As they left the bucket Black Jake bid his companion a surly "good-night" and started off as though for home. But once out of sight he turned and swiftly and silently crept back. He passed the mouth of the shaft, and disappeared in the shadow of the engine-house.

Within the engine-house Tom Allis, the engineer, stood at his post. Before him was the huge conical drum sixteen feet in diameter, round which the snake-like cable was coiled in grooves. On each side of him were those mighty engines whose gigantic power could, when the time came, snatch the carriage and loaded car up those 1,200 feet of depth in fifty seconds. With one hand on the throttle he waited for the signal

to lower. It came. The bell clanked, the throttle shot open, the steam rushed into the great cylinders, and down dropped the bucket like a stone dropped down a well. With steady eye Allis marked the cable as it reeled swiftly off the drum. He never noticed the slowly-revolving dial that told of the bucket's descent. For his practiced eye a bar of white paint daubed on the cable was a better guide. In another instant that white mark was off the drum, when the throttle was closed, the reversing bar shot back with a crash, again the steam rushed into the cylinders, and the engine, with a few short pants, stopped. The bucket swung at the same depth within half an inch that it had when Black Jake climbed on board. It was Tom Allis's boast that if he knew a man's exact height he could drop that bucket on his head without doing more than smooth out his hair.

He knew there was one more man to come up. The pump runner's shift would not expire for four hours yet, and all the sinkers but one were up. With his hand on the throttle lever he waited for the signal to hoist. A minute passed and two, but he stood like a graven statue.

Clank! clank! clank! The bell struck three times. It was the signal to hoist with care, as human weight filled the bucket. Slowly he drew the throttle open, and the gigantic engines, waking from their brief rest, once more sent the drum flying round. Coil after coil of writhing cable was wound about it. One hand on the throttle and the other on the reversing lever, Tom Allis watched the spinning drum and the white marks on it that told him when to stop. As he stood there he felt the reversing lever shake and tremble, as if some one had touched it. He had no time to think of this, for in another second the bucket was within 100 feet of the surface. He closed the throttle and pushed the reversing lever.

A wild cry burst from his lips. As he pushed it, the bar shot back with a rattling crash, but the reversing gear never moved. *The engines would not reverse.* In that awful moment his presence of mind never left him. He seized the brake bar and threw all his weight upon it. The band of steel that circled the drum

gripped tight. But what could that do to stop the massive engines running at high speed? He jammed it back and rushed from the engine-house.

As he did so, the bucket shot up from the shaft. Two men were in it. A cry burst from them as the bucket, without pause or stop, leaped up amid the heavy timbers and sped swiftly on toward the great sheave wheels. Another wild cry, and then an awful crash as the bucket dashed against the wheels. A human form whirled in the air, struck against the timbers, and plunged out of sight down the yawning blackness of the shaft. Another form was clinging to the timbers far aloft.

"Who is that?" called the engineer.

"Jim Carroll," answered the man clinging to the timbers.

"Who was that fell down the shaft?"

"Old Murphy."

Another awful cry broke the stillness of the night. Down from the shadow of the engine-house Black Jake Murphy came running.

"Who?" he cried, and no words can tell the fearful agony in his voice. "Who went down the shaft?"

"Your father, Jake," said the engineer.

With one bound Jake was at the shaft's mouth.

"Father!" he cried, "father!" But the black pit gave no answer to his frantic call. With a wild cry he turned. Throwing his hands aloft he shook his clinched fist at Carroll, still clinging to the timbers, and with a fearful imprecation on his lips fell backward into the awful depth.

* * * * * *

The investigation that followed showed that a connecting pin in the reversing gear had fallen out or been removed. It was beneath the floor on which the engineer stood, and any one who chose to crawl beneath could reach it unseen. It was also shown by Jim Carroll's testimony that old Murphy, the pump runner, who should not have left his post until relieved, had insisted on coming up to the surface with him.

There is a proverb of respectable parentage which warns men against "monkeying with the buzz saw." That it is quite as dangerous to be too familiar with electricity seems to be one of many morals that may be drawn from the following story which Edward S. Van Zile wrote for the St. Louis *Republic*.

A STRANGE CONFESSOR.

I.

A GREAT mystery surrounded the sudden death of Alexander Dale. Certain metropolitan newspapers claimed that he had committed suicide, while others contended that a murder had been perpetrated. The detectives were all at sea in the matter and refused to express an opinion.

So far as the public knew, the facts of the case were these: Alexander Dale, president of the Western Land Improvement Company, with offices in the Hollis Building, New York City, had been for years a prominent and respected business man of the metropolis. He had been a member of several exclusive clubs, and had kept bachelor's hall in handsome style. One morning he was found dead in bed, a dagger through his heart. The weapon was so situated that two theories regarding his demise were tenable. Either his own hand or that of a murderer might have struck the fatal blow.

The weakness of the position held by those who considered him a suicide lay in the fact that no motive for self destruction seemed to exist. His financial affairs appeared to be in a flourishing condition, and no complications with the gentler sex were known to cloud his record. His fellow-clubmen testified unanimously that he had been a consistent woman-hater, that he was not prone to melancholia, and that on the night preceding his death he had left their company in unusually high spirits.

On the other hand, there was not the slightest clue to a murderer. His apartments were on the second floor of a large building on Fifth Avenue, and he was in the habit of remaining out so late at night that his

incomings were never noted by the janitor, who usually retired long before Dale left his club.

The mystery caused much gossip and discussion for a few days and was then practically forgotten. Some new sensation had turned the attention of the metropolis away from the Dale case.

II.

There was only one man in the world who knew how Alexander Dale died—that was the murderer. Eugene Scranton, secretary and treasurer of the Western Land Improvement Company, had killed the president. Why? Because Dale and Scranton were scoundrels of a strictly modern type. They both knew that the W. L. I. C. was a gigantic fraud. No one else did. So Scranton murdered Dale in order that he might alone reap the profits of a great swindle and retain in his own keeping a dangerous secret. Greed and fear were the monsters that urged him to commit the worst of all crimes.

III.

Eugene Scranton sat at his breakfast-table, sipping his coffee and glancing over the morning newspapers. He was a tall, spare man, about forty years of age. His gray hair and black mustache formed a combination pleasing to the eye. To the close observer, however, there was something about the man's face that chilled the heart and awakened suspicion. Was it in the mouth or in the eyes that this father of distrust was born? It was hard to tell. Nevertheless, his was a bad face, though a handsome one.

Alexander Dale had been dead a month. Eugene Scranton smiled as he realized that the newspapers made no reference to the mystery that had caused such a furor some weeks before. He laid down the *Morning Wasp* and applied himself with considerable enthusiasm to an omelette spiced with chopped ham. He had been made president of the Western Land Improvement Company, and had placed the affairs of that organization in such shape that he would reap most of the profits and stand in no peril from any man's knowledge that he was a high-toned "crook."

The study of this man's life had been to make selfishness a science. He perceived that the modern world pays adulation to him who holds the golden keys of power. Cold, remorseless as an iceberg, he had aimed at the target of wealth. He had found that between him and the bull's-eye of his ambition stood the form of Alexander Dale. A well-directed dagger had removed this obstacle—and Eugene Scranton was a millionaire.

IV.

"Well, what do you want?"

Scranton threw down his newspaper testily and turned toward his valet, who had just entered the breakfast-room.

"Beg pardon, sir," said John, "but a man is outside with a queer-looking machine. He says you ordered a funnygraph sent here. I don't know what it is, but he's very positive, sir."

"Tell him to put it in the drawing-room," commanded the master. "Place it near the piano, do you hear?"

"Yes, sir."

The valet left the room and Eugene Scranton reapplied himself to his breakfast, his newspaper, and his self-congratulations.

V.

It was midnight and Eugene Scranton lay awake, tossing restlessly upon his bed. The world was treating him well, but his conscience, that most obnoxious organ of the human make-up, had become so aggressive that sleep had deserted his fevered couch.

In the silent, dark, mysterious hours of night it makes little difference to a man what his fellow-creatures may think of him. At that solemn time what he thinks of himself is all that is essential. Eugene Scranton knew that he was a murderer. In the bustle and excitement of the day this self-conviction was not powerful nor poignant. In the silent watches of the night, however, it became unbearable. From the shadows of his room one face gazed at him—the face

of Alexander Dale. He arose, dipped a handkerchief in ice-water, and placed the refreshing cloth against the base of his brain. For a few moments he appeared to doze. The blood that surged upward was cooled for a time, and a simple device seemed about to triumph over the insomnia that had driven him well-nigh mad.

It is not easy, however, to escape the punishment that follows sin. Eugene Scranton did not fall asleep. The blissful unconsciousness that his crime-tortured nature craved wooed him for a while, then fled from him as though in horror. He was further from sleep than before; and again his staring eyes saw in the darkness the face of Alexander Dale.

VI.

An hour had passed, an hour of agony to Scranton. Twice had he pressed his revolver against his throbbing temple. Twice had he realized that he dared not rush to a fate that frightened Hamlet and made Cato pause. A man who commits murder from greed seldom commits suicide from choice.

At last the strain became unbearable. Scranton sprang from his bed and rushed to the window.

"O God! I must confess my crime. I must confess! I must confess!"

He threw up the sash. A belated citizen was hurrying homeward on the opposite side of the street. "I'll call to him and tell him the awful secret of my soul," thought Scranton. "Wait!"

The cry startled the silent street and echoed weirdly through the dismal night. Alarmed by his voice, Scranton shut the window with a crash and rushed into the outer room. In the dim light he saw before him the outlines of his phonograph. Hysterically he threw his arms around the machine and kissed it.

"I'm saved!" he whispered. "I'll tell *you* the history of my fall."

VII.

Night after night the fatal cylinder gave comfort to Eugene Scranton. If the murderer awoke in the still, dark hours and the shadow of his crime crossed his

soul, he would stealthily leave his bedroom and place in effective position the ear-pieces of the accusing machine. Then with ghastly satisfaction he would listen to the following repetition of the tale he had told the sympathetic wax:

"I killed Alexander Dale. I had hated him for years. Together we had concocted a scheme whereby we could fleece investors who desired to gain a fortune in the twinkling of an eye. It was my brain that developed the idea of a Western land improvement company that would not be Western, would own no land, would have nothing to do with improvement, and would be a company only in name. I needed a well-known man to give his influence and reputation to the swindle, and found in Dale a colleague who was weak enough to follow my guidance, but clever enough to retain in his grip a thorough control over my life. After months of temptation I yielded to the voice of the devil and determined to rid myself of the only man in the world who stood between me and success and safety. I killed him cleverly. He had had the utmost confidence in my uprightness, and when, one evening, after dining with him at his rooms, he expressed a wish to take me to one of his clubs, I pleaded fatigue, asked permission to finish my cigar in his drawing-room, and saw him sally forth a doomed man.

"The rest was easy. For hours I awaited his return. When I heard his footsteps on the stairs I concealed myself behind a portière. After he had undressed and had fallen into a deep sleep, I plunged a dagger into his heart. Oh, it was delicious. I have enjoyed all the sensations that tempt the wealthy epicure. There is only one that fills the soul with perfect ecstasy—that is the bliss that pertains to murder."

Here the cylinder made an incoherent sound and the confession ceased

VIII.

Eugene Scranton's valet, John, was not a genius, but he possessed a good deal of shrewdness and a fair amount of common-sense. From the moment of its arrival he had been intensely interested in what he called "the funnygraph." When his master was away

he spent much of his time in trying to make the machine work. At first the results were not satisfactory; but after a week of mental effort he solved the problem involved and thereafter enjoyed himself greatly.

Scranton was constantly buying new cylinders; some with operatic music, others with banjo solos or recitations by famous actors. The much-used cylinder containing his confession he kept carefully locked in a drawer by itself, and placed it on the machine only at the dead of night. One night, after quieting his conscience by listening to the ghastly story of his crime, he failed to lock the compartment reserved for the accusing wax. It was a fatal omission; murder will out unless you always turn the key.

IX.

The next afternoon John, the valet, experienced the most frightful sensation of his life. He listened, awestruck, to his master's voice as it related the story of a great crime. Then, like the shrewd man he was, he sat down and debated with himself the best method of turning this weird find to his own advantage. At first he was inclined to inform Scranton that he had discovered his secret. John realized that his silence was worth a great deal of money, and he knew that Scranton could afford to pay well to escape the gallows.

But the valet was at heart a coward. He had long stood in awe of his master, and he reflected that a man who murders one unfortunate who holds his secret would not hesitate to sacrifice a second victim. So John abandoned the idea of black-mail.

X.

In connection with his phonographic amusements, the valet had discovered that handsome prices were paid by a "nickel-in-the-slot" company for novel cylinders. After an hour of meditation, John determined to take Eugene Scranton's confession to this concern, demand a big price for it, and then leave the city at once.

Arriving at the office of the phonograph company, he astonished the manager by these words:

"You remember the sensational death of Alexander Dale some months ago? Well, the man was murdered. This cylinder here holds the confession of the man who killed him—my master. Now, you will take this cylinder to the police and they will arrest the murderer. On the instant the city will ring with the news. Meanwhile you have reproduced the cylinder a thousand times, and your public machines contain the most sensational attraction ever offered to the victims of the phonographic habit. See? My price is $1,000. Is it a bargain?"

"Yes," said the manager, writing out a check. John, the valet, sailed for Europe that afternoon.

XI.

Eugene Scranton has been condemned to death. He will die by electricity—the agent of his confession

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New York.

There was no Nathan to bring this David to terms, and as he seemed to be quite without conscience, it is doubtful whether even a Nathan could have reached him. This man, whose character is drawn by Walter Besant in the San Francisco *Sunday Call*, unlike the great Hebrew King, was of the severely virtuous type and in spite of that fact, or because of it, he was a scoundrel.

KING DAVID'S FRIEND.

CHAPTER I.

"HAVE you got your letters by this mail, Longden?"

"No, I haven't, my son. I never do get any letters. I have left off expecting letters."

His chum, who was a new arrival, looked surprised.

"Why, man, I have been here fifteen years—think of that!. think of that. Fifteen years. If I were a coolie, dead and buried fifteen years ago, my grave trodden level with the ground, I couldn't be more forgotten."

"But you've got friends at home. You must have people——"

"I have. There's my elder brother, the Prig—I've got him. And there are cousins by dozens, first and second, and second once removed. And I had a father, but he is dead, poor old man! Friends? Plenty of friends. As for friendships—well. But once I had a true friend. We outdid David and Jonathan. So far as I know, David never—but, then, Jonathan died young, and, perhaps, there were passages. Ours was a divine, an ideal friendship—no two friends were more so; because you see in the higher planes of friendship what one gives the other has got to accept. The world doesn't understand this, for there is no friendship in business, and we are mostly business men; therefore there are no friends."

"I don't understand."

"No more do I now. It was magnificent, but it wasn't business. Well, as I said, I had a true friend once—a more than pal, a closer than brother. Where is that true friend now?"

"When you go home again——

"I never shall go home again, sonny. This is my home. Very thankful I ought to be to have such a home. What more can a man desire? From ten to four the healthful labor of the office. Home to this elegant mansion at five. A stroll on the shore till half-past six or so. Dinner—the finest dinner in the world, with the best claret in the world. No promotion, even, to agitate the soul."

"You will get promotion some day. You must. Oh, it is shameful."

"You will, my boy. As for me, what does it matter? I draw two hundred rupees a month. I am a junior in the Audit Office. We live in this agreeable mansion of three rooms and a veranda. Its walls are made of packing cases and its roof is made of the tin which formerly lined those cases. It is surrounded by a lovely compound containing three ragged bananas and a prickly pear, and it is furnished sumptuously. Behold! Style, Second Empire, for the most part."

The speaker, a man with a countenance still ruddy spite of his tropical experience, and a big brown beard, a large-limbed man, lay back in his chair, and replaced his pipe between his lips. He spoke bitterly, but his face was not bitter, and his eyes were as kindly as the eyes of any Silver King or Lord of Nitrate boom could be. The other was a young man of one and twenty, just beginning his career in the same splendid service which had taken away the elder man's youth. The united resources of this mess were slender; and when the rent of twenty rupees a month had been paid, and the wages of their one servant and the dhobie and the claret (which was dear at six-pence the bottle) and the whiskey and the stringy beef and skinny chicken which graced their board, there was really very little left for the minor luxuries. Yet, in lands where twice a year there falls no shade on any side of rock or house, the minor luxuries are to most the simplest necessities. On the two sides of the room were two small bedrooms; in each, a bed, a mosquito-curtain, an arm-wire, a chair and a wash-stand. The room in front opened upon a small veranda.

"Well, my boy," Longden went on, "you shall have

better luck; you shall get promoted early; you shall leave me and mess with other promotions; chief clerk presently, in your department; acting head of a department; sent off to some other colony as head; Colonial Secretary somewhere else; Lieutenant-Governor, C. M. C.; Governor, K. C. M. G. Heart up, sonny. The world is all before you."

The younger man was a little disconcerted at this outburst; when one is twenty it is hard to understand that a man of five and thirty, which seems an age so advanced, and a man who has "stuck" in his upward flight, and one who is invariably cheerful and apparently contented, should ever have had ambitions.

Longden's case was exceptional. There are plenty of shady Englishmen who get taken on in the colony in obscure branches of the Government services with never a chance or a hope of promotion, but for a young man to be actually sent out by the Colonial Office at the age of twenty to begin, as he should, with his foot on the lowest rung, and then be left there, is not common. After fifteen years he remained a junior in his department; he drew, it is true, £240 a year, or double his original pay, but he had been passed by all his contemporaries and now remained stuck fast, apparently forgotten. It was said that there was some scandal about him which stood in the way of his promotion—something he had done. What that was did not take a definite form. Here, however, was the fact: An English gentleman of good family, left in the lower branches of the colonial service, five and thirty years of age, possessed of every quality that should command success. What did it mean?

"There's some news in the Commercial special," said the young fellow. "We've got a new Governor. He comes out next mail. Here's the paper."

He tossed it over. There was a half column hastily printed with a summary of the month. Longden glanced down the paragraphs. Suddenly he stopped, sat up and dropped the paper.

"Good Lord," he cried.

"What is it?" asked his companion.

Longden sprang to his feet. Then he stepped out upon the little veranda before the cottage and began

to walk up and down with an energy worthy of his native land in an east wind.

Presently Longden came back and took up the paper and read slowly a second time the paragraph that had startled him. "Sir Henry Overston Dunkeld, K. C. B., is the newly-appointed Governor. Sir Henry Dunkeld, the eldest son of Major-General Dunkeld, R. A., was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he obtained a first-class and a fellowship in the year 1875. He was called to the bar in 1877. He sat in the House of Commons for the borough of Chester on the Conservative side from 1879 to 1882. He was then appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Penang. In 1884 he was made Governor of the Leeward Islands. Sir Henry is believed to possess great administrative abilities. He is personally popular. He is said to possess great charm of manner, and his sympathies with any religious and philanthropic movement are well known."

"Good Lord!" said Longden, once more. "And I an assistant clerk in his audit office."

CHAPTER II.

He stepped out again upon the veranda. The sea breeze had sprung up; the air was refreshed; he drew a long breath and looked out into the darkness. His memory went back seventeen years. A morning came back to him; he saw what happened, not as he saw it then, an actor on the scene, but he saw it, now from the outside, he as the audience. The actors were two spectres of the past, young men both; the face of one was radiant, his eyes and cheeks flushed, his lip trembling. The other was also flushed, but his eyes were dropped, his head hung, his voice faltered.

"Jack," he murmured, "I cannot let you do it. No friend can expect such a thing of another."

"Why," said Jack—Longden's name, in fact, was Jack, but it was fifteen years since he had been called by his Christian name and he had almost forgotten it —"Why, man, what's the good of being friends if we can't stand by each other? Look here, it's a terrible mess."

"It is, indeed. To me it is ruin—everything—every-

thing is lost, including—including—Eva. Good God! Who is to tell her?"

"Well, Harry, sooner than Eva should suffer—sooner than you should suffer—I would suffer myself. Now, look here—I've done this thing—you know—not you at all—not you at all." He laid his hand upon his friend's.

"No, no—I cannot. Think of the consequences."

"There will be a bit of a shindy. I dare say it will blow over. My prig of an elder brother will groan and say he always knew—but you will be happy, old man, and—and so—what is the use of being friends, and sworn friends, too, if we are not to bear the burdens of each other?"

The other protested, but weakly and with tears and self-accusations; it was too great a sacrifice. He had been a fool and a wretch; he must take the consequences. Then Jack remarked that there was another person to consider, namely, a certain Eva. Above all things she was to be kept from the unhappiness which would fall upon her if she knew.

Then the other man gave way. But he made a condition—so much grace was left to him. He sat down and he wrote at headlong speed a certain little narrative. This he signed, dated, read through, folded, and gave to his friend.

"Jack," he said, "I will accept your sacrifice on one condition. Here is a complete confession of the whole business. Take it. Do what you like with it. If you suffer from the consequences, reveal it; I am altogether in your hands. If at any time in the future you can advance yourself by means of that paper, use it. You have the right to use it."

"He certainly said that," murmured the audience. "He said it and I have the paper still, and he is governor and I am a junior in his audit office."

Then he looked again and he saw a girl. She turned her eyes from one to the other in astonishment. A very beautiful girl she was. At the sight of her the audience caught his breath.

"Why," she said, "what is the matter with you both?"

"Eva," cried the man, whose burden was to be transferred, but said no more.

"Eva," said Jack, "I am sorry you have come at this moment; but you may as well hear the truth at once."

"Truth? What truth?" She looked quickly, not at Jack, but at the other.

"The truth is," said Jack, "that a very disgraceful thing has been found out and that one of us is going to say good-by—most likely forever."

"What is it, Harry?" She caught him by the arm. "Why do you look like this?"

"Because he is my friend, Eva. I have shamed him. It is I who had done this disgraceful thing. You had better go now, both of you."

"Yes, he said that," murmured the audience. And they went away and left the guilty man. And there was an end of everything.

The guilty man folded the confession, and placed it in his pocket-book. "Well," he said, "I would have done more than that for Eva's sake, not to speak of Harry. I don't suppose she will ever know that I have done it or why. Now we must face the footlights."

The scene disappeared, and the black night returned. Longden was on the veranda again looking out into the darkness; he heard the gentle lapping of the water on the coral reef and the knell of the bell-buoy tolling out at sea beyond the harbor; and the filhaos mourned and sighed in the fresh sea-breeze.

"Yes," said Longden, "he was eighteen and he believed in friendship. What did the other man believe in?"

And he remembered how the thing which he had assumed was really a much more serious thing than he had believed—in fact, a thing which stains, a thing which will not wash off; a thing for which he was immediately sent home to his father who refused to receive him; for which, in fact, he was bundled off to a small clerkship in a distant colony, with no farewells except from his elder brother, "the prig," who informed him that it was never too late to build up a new character on the ruins of one which had been destroyed.

"When Jonathan died," Longden murmured, "David wept and lamented. Suppose Jonathan had disappeared in disgrace only to be recovered when David was king over Israel."

He went to his room and to his bed in the dark. But he slept little and when he awoke in the morning it was with an uneasy sense of having become King David and of having found his old friend Jonathan adding up the accounts in the chief steward's chamber, and of being embarrassed by the discovery.

CHAPTER III.

The monotony of life praised so highly was rudely broken by this strange event. The colony was so limited as to size, the officials so few in number, that the governor would certainly know something about every one in the service. There was not the least doubt but King David would discover Jonathan. Henry Overston Dunkeld, king, would discover his old friend, John Lorimer Longden, among the scribes of the palace. What would the king say? Would he call for a purple robe and wrap it round that scribe and send him forth upon a white horse richly caparisoned, with a trumpeter proclaiming the honors done by order of the king? Or should Jonathan begin it? Should he bow himself down upon the ground saying, "O, king, live forever, I am Jonathan, friend of thy youth, and I am held down in low estate by reason of a certain thing?" How would that do?

Longden pondered the subject long and doubtfully. What would happen? As for the confession he had it still. The papers lay among other papers in a desk. There was a letter from his father casting him off; one from his brother preaching a funeral sermon as to a condemned criminal. There was a portrait of a girl—the Eva for whose sake his friend had consented; there was another of his friend himself, a gallant youth, and some letters from that friend, written before the fatal transfer—none after; and some verses written in praise of Eva, dancing—they were after Herrick. "If at any time in the future you can advance yourself by using that paper, use it." The words returned again and again. How should he use it? He might place the paper in the hands of the governor and leave the matter to him. He might go to him and say: "I am your old friend. We know what we know, but we trust each other. What

I have done, I have done." So thinking, his heart grew soft to that old friend; he said to himself that he must have suffered from thinking of what had been done; but that for Eva's sake—doubtless now his wife—the thing was well done. He would do it again, whatever happened.

With the rest of the world, with the Acting Governor, the Bishop, the Colonel Commandant, the Legislative Council and the heads of departments, he went down to the quay—he did not stand with these illustrious persons, but well behind them in the crowd—to receive the Governor.

His Excellency, Sir Henry Dunkeld, K. C. M. G., came ashore in the Harbormaster's launch, with an awning and crew of six stout negroes. He was accompanied by his wife, his daughter, a child of ten, his daughter's governess and his aid-de-camp.

Oh, yes; Jack Longden knew him at once. And Lady Dunkeld, too—Eva, of course. Then he had married Eva. There she was, and after seventeen years a lovely woman still. Of course he would have recognized her, too, at once. His heart became very soft watching these old friends of his youth.

His Excellency drew near. Jack leaned forward a little and lifted his hat, not with the idea of catching his eyes at all; but the Governor saw him—saw him—and he stopped suddenly, turned white and reeled.

"It is nothing," he said, recovering quickly. "The heart—a sudden faintness. Let us go on."

The procession went on. But the Governor looked back once more into the crowd. For he had seen, after seventeen years, standing among the common people, the old friend of his youth, by whose act and deed he himself was what he was and where he was.

"He recognized me," said Jonathan, striding away. "He caught my eye and he knew me. I saw him change color and stop. Strange meeting after so many years! He will send for me to-morrow, and we shall have a talk. Of course he will trust me still. Should I send him that paper? I think not."

So while the new Governor entertained the Legislative Council at a banquet, his old friend sat at dinner in his cabin and contentedly munched his curried beef

and drank his sour claret and water and congratulated himself on the beauty and the happiness of the wife for whose sake he had taken this burden upon himself. In the morning, when he recalled the landing and the recognition, he understood that in the latter there was surprise or dismay, terror—but not a sign of joy. And he ceased to feel quite so warmly toward his old friend.

CHAPTER IV.

So he did nothing. The new Governor paid visits to various places in the kingdom, and gained great popularity by his affability, and by the many charms and graces of his wife. But he made no sign at all to his old friend.

Time went on. Three months passed, and no advance was made.

"I say, Longden," said his chum, one day, "I heard something this morning that I should like to tell you."

"Tell away, old man."

"It concerns yourself, and I want you not to get angry about it."

"I won't. Tell away."

"I was in the private secretary's room, sitting at a separate table, making a *precis* for him. Well, the Governor passed through on his way to his own room. He stopped at the secretary's table and began to talk. I suppose no one noticed me. He was talking about officers and salaries. Presently he pointed to a name on the list, and looked at his secretary as much as to say, who is this?

"'J. L. Longden,' said the secretary. 'He is a very good clerk.'

"'He has been here a long time.'

"'I think he has no friends at home. There is something against him. Not anything out here—at home, and a long while ago.' Then he told a story about you, Longden."

"You needn't repeat the story," said Longden. "I believe I have heard the story before. My brother, the Prig, told it at the Colonial Office to somebody who told it to somebody else, who brought it to the colonial secretary here. The story is the property of the office.

They don't tell it about, but if there is any question of promotion they bring it out and look at it. Go on. By the way, the story is only half true, and the half that is true isn't exactly the half that they believe."

"Why don't you let them know, then——"

"Because, my sonny, there are other people to be considered. Meantime, what said the king?"

"Well, his Excellency heard the story, and shook his head. Then he said slowly and sorrowfully: 'There are things which can never be forgotten. Forgiven,' he added, 'they may be, and are, by the persons injured. But forgotten by the world—never. A man who has such a story as this believed of him is like a man who is lamed for life. Such an action—such a fall—can never be retrieved. Pity! pity!' Then he went into his private room and shut the door."

The man with the shady record laughed. "Ah!" he said, "virtue is only weak by reason of her unforgiveness; otherwise she would draw the whole world like beauty, with a single hair. He heard this story for the first time, and it—it shocked his righteousness."

CHAPTER V.

A few days after this conversation the postman delivered a letter to John Longden, Audit Office. He dropped the letter into his pocket and went on with his auditing. When the clock struck four the other clerks made haste to leave their work. Longden lingered. When they were all gone he drew out the letter and looked at it.

"I knew her writing," he said. "What has she to say? She can know nothing." He opened the letter.

"Dear Jack," it began, in the most friendly manner possible. "Dear Jack," and from Lady Dunkeld, the queen of the colony, sole consort of King David. Why had she not written "Dear Jonathan?" "I have just heard that you are in the colony. I know and I appreciate the reason why you have not come to see me. Yet, I must see you, if not in my own drawing-room in the presence of the aid-de-camp, then alone. I must see you. Come to the private gardens of Gov-

ernment House on Sunday morning, at half past eleven, when the Governor and everybody are at church. I will meet you behind the basin. For the sake of old times when we were all innocent and hopeful together, do not fail. Your old friend, Eva."

"I wonder what she means?" Jack finished the letter, which did not require a second reading, and replaced it in his pocket. "What can she mean? She did not recognize me, though he did. People don't talk about me at Government House. Who told her? If David the King told her, David the King must have felt prickings. I will go."

Soon after eleven o'clock, when the governor, his daughter, his daughter's governess and his aid-de-camp were in their long pew at the Cathedral, and the bishop was in his seat, and the civil chaplain was reading the service, Jack Longden found himself in the private grounds of Government House. No one at all, not even the Indian gardener, was in the gardens.

He found a bench in the shade and sat down.

He had not long to wait. He heard a foot-step, and rose to meet a lady, who walked quickly along one of the paths. She was alone.

"Thank you, Jack," she said, giving him her hand.

"I am here, Lady Dunkeld," he began, but he broke down. "Eva," he cried, "you have not forgotten me —the man who disgraced himself!"

"No, no; you are here; I learned it only the other day, and you are quite low down in the service. He told me. It is horrible! It is dreadful!"

"Nay—some must rise and some must fall. And, after that ugly business——"

"Jack, I know all."

"What do you know? There was a row about it and my father wouldn't have me in the house, and my brother—you remember my brother, he was always an awful prig—he surpassed himself and made reconciliation impossible and everything else; so they found me a place out here and I suppose my brother kindly told them at the Colonial Office, and so the story came out here and—that's all. Of course promotion is impossible for a man with such a story as that behind him. Well, Eva—Lady Dunkeld—that is all. What does it

matter now?" For his old friend was looking strangely at him and the tears were in her eyes.

"Oh!" she repeated "it is horrible! It is dreadful!"

"No, not so dreadful as you think. There is enough to live upon, and what more can a man desire, a man with such a story as that behind him?"

She sat down on the bench beside him and bowed her head and wept aloud.

"Nay," he said, "it is too much that I should——"

"Jack!" she sprang to her feet again. "You tear my very heart. You tear me to pieces—for I know all—all—all—I tell you that I know all."

"You cannot know all. It is impossible."

"I have known it for ten years. He fell ill and was on the point of death and confessed it all to me. I promised, thinking he was on his death-bed, to carry his message of remorse. He did not die, but the message remains. Take it. His prayer for forgiveness."

"Yes, but he got better," said Longden, dryly. "So he told you, did he? It was not well done. It was a breach of confidence. Why it was in the thought that you would never know——"

"And I do know. Jack, nothing that he can do or say could destroy the wrong of all these years."

"Nothing. And yet you see I took the consequences, whatever they might be. They did turn out rather more unpleasant than I thought, but I have not complained."

"If you were to stand up to-morrow and read aloud the confession which he gave you, that would not give you back these lost and ruined years."

"No," said Jack. "It might astonish people more than a bit. But it wouldn't help me."

"Have you ever thought that—about this sublime self-sacrifice of your common youth—that it would be wholly destroyed and rendered worse than useless were it to become known?"

"I do not understand. I have always, on the other hand, looked forward to a time when, somehow or other, my character should be set right again—if only to disappoint my brother, who is a prig."

"He, who was then a young man like yourself, with

his future all before him, is now a man who has succeeded—he has won distinction and reputation; he has a wife and children—children, Jack. If you ruin him—as you may—as you can—you ruin the children and you destroy the wife."

"I see," he replied. "That is what you wanted to say to me? To be sure I hadn't considered that."

"When we landed, he saw you on the port and recognized you. He said nothing to me, at that time, but I perceived that he was anxious and unhappy. It is three months, and during the whole time he has been in an agony of terror and remorse. A few days ago he heard the old story told again—the story that he thought forgotten was repeated to him, attached to your name. It is common property—the talk of his secretaries. He is well-nigh mad with the recollection and the hideousness of it."

"Oh, the story. That's my brother's doings."

"I told him I should see you. He has gone to church this morning—to church—knowing that I am to meet you here. What am I to tell him?"

"Why," said Jack, "considering it is three months since he came, and that I have not made any sign, he might take it for granted that I am not going to move or to speak. I don't deny, Eva, that when I heard he was coming I was a good bit shaken. I thought that I might send him a copy of the confession, and ask him what he proposed doing. I say that this temptation did assail me. I am ashamed to own that it did."

"Jack," she interrupted him quickly, "there is no safety possible for us so long as that paper remains in your hands. Consider—you may die; you may even, God forgive me for saying so, fall away and betray us. The noblest inheritance of my children is their father's honor. It lies at the mercy of an accident. His honor! think of what it is to him—to me—to all of us. Do not leave that to chance. There is but one person in the world that knows the truth—it is yourself. There is but one proof of the truth—it is that paper."

He made no reply. She went on again more passionately.

"Put it beyond your own power, most loyal of men, to betray and to ruin us. Leave to my children their

father's honor; leave him to follow out his career to the end. Will you do this for me—for my children—in memory of the past?"

Then Jack spoke—slowly, because he was anxious to speak for once and so to have done with it.

"When I read in the paper that he was coming, I heard his voice plain and clear saying: 'Take my confession. Do what you like with it. If you suffer from the consequences, reveal it. If in the future you can advance yourself by means of this paper, use it—you have the right to use it.' I could not use his confession. How could I use it? Could I threaten with it—demand promotion with it—extort money with it? Then I learned by accident the other day how his private secretary told him the story and how he said in his grandly austere way that some things can never be forgotten, that they cling to a man through life and hinder him. Now I do think, making every allowance for official purity, that was carrying virtue to an extreme. But it made me deliberate what to do next. And I have found out the way. It is all clear to me at last."

"What way? In the name of pity, what way?"

"If I had been the governor, and he had been the junior clerk, I should have tried to make up to him, quietly and without explanation, for all these years by such advancement as lay in my power. I should have done this for him in order to let him know that the past was buried but the sense of the sacrifice was left."

"He does not do it in order to let you know that the past cannot be forgotten."

"Yes, and out of his fears lest the man who knows it should have become a cad."

"Do not be too bitter, Jack."

"He might have played the part of Providence. He has preferred to play the part of the judge. Well, my way is plain. I have brought the papers. Here they are. I will give them to you, Lady Dunkeld, on one condition."

"Any condition—all conditions."

"Nay; this is a very simple condition. It is that during the whole of his official residence here he will leave me absolutely alone. Let him never interfere with me; let him never have speech with me; let him

never offer me any promotion; he must not, on the other hand, cause that story to be spread about—he must compass neither good nor harm for me. You promise this, Eva, for your husband?"

"Yes, yes: I promise upon my—upon his—honor, which now nothing can touch. Oh! now I breathe again. Conditions? Ask the whole of my fortune—you shall have it so long as I have this paper. You are certain that there is no copy?"

"There is no copy. You are quite safe. If I were to proclaim the whole truth to-morrow no one would believe a word of it, and an action for libel would be my reward."

"We are safe." She sat down and panted, with heaving breast. "What can I say? That I can never thank you enough? That is a poor thing to say. Yet what else am I to say? Why, I can never tell any one. You have done a most noble thing, and I cannot even tell my children. You are suffering continuously and I cannot even tell my children. You are suffering contumely and I cannot even offer to relieve you, nothing can relieve you now. The consequences continue. One man sinned and another goes in obscurity all his life for that sin. Go, Jack. On our heads lies the real shame, the bitterness and the remorse. That is our punishment. We are not worthy to touch your hand. Go, Jack; I will give him the paper. We will keep your conditions."

He lifted his hat and turned without another word. So they parted, who will never meet again.

CHAPTER VI.

The monotony of his life, broken in this manner, began again. The conditions were kept. The Governor took no notice of him at all. The time passed by. Sir Henry Dunkeld drew near to the end of his time. Jack was now forty, still an assistant clerk; still, to outward seeming, as contented as the most successful of men—still living in his shanty near the seashore. Long since the youngster who messed with him when Sir Henry Dunkeld arrived had passed him on the ladder of promotion, and was in a mess where they

belonged to society, and gave dinners and went to balls.

One day, a little while before this governor left the colony, Jack's own chief sent for him.

"I ought to tell you, Longden," he said, "that an attempt has been made with his Excellency to recommend you for the vacant post—it was that of Assistant Auditor-General. It was pointed out that there is no one in the office who possesses anything like your knowledge or your grasp of the office and its work. But, unfortunately, without success. In fact, his Excellency refused absolutely. You know the reason, I dare say."

"I think I do. There is a story about my having got into a mess before coming out here——"

"That is the reason," said the chief, anxious to spare him further pain. "There are some messes which the world agrees to condemn."

"And his Excellency cannot condone this. Of course I have known it for a long time."

"There is no man in the world, I do believe, of higher principle than Sir Henry Dunkeld. Sometimes, however, one would wish for a little less austerity, in this case especially. He says that those who occupy the higher official positions must be able to show blameless records privately as well as officially. Lord help us all, if he knew as much as I know. Upon my word, Longden, I have done all I can for you. I am more than sorry for you."

"Thank you," said Longden, and retired.

CHAPTER VII.

The other day I met a man at the club—an old acquaintance—and we began to talk of other men, which is the only topic of conversation open to those who are old acquaintances but not old friends.

Said he, presently. "Did you know Canon Longden?"

"No; he was a bit before my time."

"Not a bad sort, but too good, you know. Carried goodness to unforgiveness. A prig of virtue. That's what I always thought of him. Irritated one, you know,

by an unreasonable hatred of the wicked world—used to despise sinners. Now, I like a man who has a little feeling for the slips and the stumbles—eh? Well, Canon Longden's dead."

"Is he?" I replied not much interested.

"Yes. He had a very tidy property near us. He had no children, and was a widower, and was not on speaking terms with his only brother, and so we rather expected he would have left it for the objects, you know—converting niggers and building churches."

"Well, didn't he?"

"Not a bit of it. He forgot to make a will, and so the property goes, I hear, to this younger brother, who was packed off to some miserable colonial appointment years ago, after getting into a terrible mess. His family cut him, and now he is coming home to take all the family money. So the prig of virtue has ended his life by enriching the sinner. I remember Jack Longden well—and a better youngster never lived. How he came to do it—but there."

A man who had been sitting near us by the fireside rose and walked quickly down the room.

"Know him? That is Sir Henry Dunkeld, G. C. B. and G. C. M. G. and governor of half her Majesty's colonies, one after the other. Another prig of virtue, he is. Going to be made a peer, I believe. I say, when this colonial chap, this Jack Longden, comes to live on his property, I suppose the people won't be raking up past scandals, will they? It's wonderful though how things stick. I shouldn't wonder if they refuse to call upon him."

This woman saw the folly and pity of it all—and so did the other one for that matter—but an involuntary and distasteful rivalry spoiled, in this case, as in so many others, what might have been a noble friendship. Her recollections are given us by Olive Schreiner in the New York *Sunday World*.

THE WOMAN'S ROSE.

"And I saw that the women also held each other's hands."—*Dreams*.

I HAVE an old brown carved box; the lid is broken and tied with a string. In it I keep little squares of paper, with hair inside and a little picture which hung over my brother's bed when we were children, and other things as small. I have in it a rose. Other women also have such boxes where they keep such trifles, but no one has my rose.

When my eye is dim, and my heart grows faint, and my faith in woman flickers, and her present is an agony to me, and her future a despair, the scent of that dead rose, withered for twelve years, comes back to me. I know there will be spring, as surely as the birds know it when they see above the snow two tiny, quivering green leaves. Spring cannot fail us.

There were other flowers in the box once; a bunch of white acacia flowers, gathered by the strong hand of a man, as we passed down a village street on a sultry afternoon, when it had rained, and the drops fell on us from the leaves of the acacia trees. The flowers were damp; they made mildew marks on the paper I folded them in. After many years I threw them away. There is nothing of them left in the box now, but a faint smell of dried acacia, that recalls that sultry summer afternoon; but the rose is in the box still.

It is many years ago now; I was a girl of fifteen, and I went to visit in a small, up-country town. It was young in those days, and two days' journey from the nearest village; the population consisted mainly of men. A few were married, and had their wives and children, but most were single. There was only one young girl there when I came. She was about seventeen, fair, and rather fully-fleshed; she had large,

dreamy blue eyes, and wavy light hair; full, rather heavy lips, until she smiled, and then her face broke into dimples, and all her white teeth shone. The hotel-keeper may have had a daughter, and the farmer in the outskirts had two, but we never saw them. She reigned alone. All the men worshipped her. She was the only woman they had to think of. They talked of her on the "stoop," at the market, at the hotel; they watched for her at street corners; they hated the man she bowed to or walked with down the street. They brought flowers to the front door; they offered her their horses; they begged her to marry them when they dared. Partly, there was something noble and heroic in this devotion of men to the best woman they knew; partly, there was something natural in it, that these men, shut off from the world, should pour at the feet of one woman the worship that otherwise would have been given to twenty; and partly, there was something mean in their envy of one another. If she had raised her little finger, I suppose, she might have married any one out of twenty of them.

Then I came. I do not think I was prettier; I do not think I was so pretty as she was. I was certainly not so handsome. But I was vital, and I was new, and she was old—they all forsook her and followed me. They worshipped me. It was to my door that the flowers came; it was I had twenty horses offered me when I could only ride one; it was for me they waited at street corners; it was what I said and did that they talked of. Partly I liked it. I had lived alone all my life; no one ever told me that I was beautiful and a woman. I believed them; I did not know it was simply a fashion which one man had set, and the rest followed unreasoningly. I liked them to ask me to marry them, and to say No. I despised them. The mother heart had not swelled in me yet; I did not know all men were my children, as the large woman knows when her heart is grown. I was too small to be tender. I liked my power. I was like a child with a new whip, which it goes about cracking everywhere, not caring against what. I could not wind it up and put it away. Men were curious creatures, who liked me, I could never tell why.

Only one thing took from my pleasure; I could not bear that they had deserted her for me. I liked her great, dreamy blue eyes, I liked her slow walk and drawl. When I saw her sitting among men, she seemed to me much too good to be among them. I would have given all their compliments if she would once have smiled at me as she smiled at them, with all her face breaking into radiance, with her dimples and flashing teeth. But I knew it never could be; I felt sure she hated me; that she wished I was dead; that she wished I had never come to the village. She did not know, when we went out riding, and a man who had always ridden beside her came to ride beside me, that I sent him away; that once when a man thought to win my favor by ridiculing her slow drawl before me I turned on him so fiercely that he never dared to come before me again. I knew she knew that at the hotel men had made a bet as to which was the prettier, she or I, and had asked each man who came in, and that the one who had staked on me won. I hated them for it, but I would not let her see that I cared about what she felt toward me.

She and I never spoke to each other. If we met in the village street we bowed and passed on; when we shook hands we did so silently, and did not look at each other. But I thought she felt my presence in a room just as I felt hers.

At last the time for my going came. I was to leave the next day. Some one I knew gave a party in my honor, to which all the village was invited.

Now it was midwinter; there was nothing in the garden but a few dahlias and chrysanthemums, and I suppose that for two hundred miles round there was not a rose to be bought for love or money. Only in the garden of a friend of mine, in a sunny corner between the oven and the brick wall, there was a rose tree growing which had on it one bud. It was white. It had been promised to the girl to wear at the party.

The evening came; when I arrived and went to the waiting-room, to take off my mantle, I found the girl already there. She was dressed in a pure white dress, with her great white arms and shoulders showing, her bright hair glittering in the candle light, and the white

rose fastened at her breast. She looked like a queen. I said "Good evening," and turned away quickly to the glass to arrange my old black scarf across my old black dress.

Then I felt a hand touch my hair.

"Stand still," she said.

I looked in the glass. She had taken the white rose from her breast, and was fastening it in my hair.

"How nice dark hair is; it sets off flowers so." She stepped back and looked at it. "It looks much better there!"

I turned round and looked at her.

"You are so beautiful to me," I said.

"Y-e-s," she said, slowly; "I'm glad."

We stood looking at each other.

Then they came in and swept us away. All the evening we did not come near to each other. Only once, as she passed, she smiled at me.

The next morning I left town.

I never saw her again.

Years after I heard she had married and gone to America; it may or may not be so—but the rose is in the box still.

In these days of mind-reading and hypnotism when the most marvellous thing is easily credible, perhaps even the occurrences so interestingly described by Erckmann-Chatrian in this story may be believed. At any rate the story—which was translated for ROMANCE by M. E. B.—is a good one.

SUGGESTED SUICIDE.

AT that time—said Christian—I was as poor as a church mouse, and had taken refuge in the gable end of an old house on the Strasse Minnesinger at Nuremberg.

I dwelt in the angle of the slated roof, and could only stand upright in the middle of my room with its sloping walls. To reach my window I had to walk over my straw pallet, but this window had a magnificent unbroken view of city and country. I could see the cats gravely promenading in the gutters, the swans on the distant river bringing food to their devouring young, the pigeons with their tails spread like fans whirling to the depths of the street below, and when the Angelus bell called the world to prayer they would come and perch on my roof crooning their melancholy song. I could see the good burghers sitting before their doors, smoking their pipes, and the young girls in their short red petticoats with their pitchers on their arms, laughing and talking around the fountain. I would watch the windows of the city light up, one by one; then gradually all would fade away, the shadow-queen, Night, would lay her mantle on the earth and sky, the bats come flitting from their hiding places, and I would go to sleep in sweet solitude.

The old second-hand dealer, Toubac, knew the way to my garret as well as I knew it myself. He was not afraid to climb my ladder, and every week his goat-like head, surmounted by a reddish wig, would peer through my trap-door, his fingers clinging to the edge of my loft, as he said, "Ach Himmel, Master Christian, have you anything new?"—to which I would reply, "Come in, come in; I am about finishing a little landscape for you. Then with a silent laugh his great lank body would lengthen, lengthen, until he touched the roof.

To do Toubac justice, he never chaffered with me. He bought all my sketches, one with another, at fifteen florins, and sold them for forty. Oh! he was an honest Jew.

This kind of life pleased me. I was happy and content, when one day the whole city of Nuremberg was startled by a strange, mysterious event. Not far from my dormer window, a little to the left, was the Inn of the Bœuf-Gras, an old inn very renowned throughout the country. There were always three or four wagons standing before the door, loaded with sacks and barrels. The country people on their way to market all stopped at the Bœuf-Gras for their tipple of beer.

The gable end of this inn was remarkable for its peculiar form. It was very narrow and pointed; the sides were cut in saw-teeth, and grotesque carving—intertwined serpents—ornamented the cornice and windows. But what was more remarkable, the house facing it had exactly the same carving, the same ornaments, even the same iron rod for the sign-board. You could almost imagine that these two old dwellings reflected each other, only behind the inn a great oak spread its shadowing leaves above the roof, while the roof of the other house was clearly outlined against the sky. Again, as the Bœuf-Gras was gay and animated, the other house was dark and silent. On one side, crowds of drinkers were incessantly coming and going, shouting, singing, and cracking their whips, on the other side, were silence and solitude. Only once or twice a day, the heavy door would open to let an old woman pass through, her back bent like a bow, her chin long and pointed, her robe clinging to her hips, and an enormous basket on her arm.

The physiognomy of this old woman struck me forcibly; her little green eyes, her thin sharp nose, her great flowered shawl, which seemed at least a hundred years old, the lace on her bonnet falling down to her eyebrows, all seemed so fantastic that she interested me in spite of myself. I wanted to know what this lonely old woman was doing in that great, deserted house. I imagined she lived a life of good works and pious meditations.

But one day I stopped in the street a moment to

look at her; she suddenly turned and gave me a glance so horrible in expression, distorting her face with such hideous grimaces, that I fairly shuddered. Then walking off, shaking her trembling head, and drawing her great shawl about her, she disappeared behind the heavy door. "She is mad," I said, "a wicked old madwoman. I was stupid to interest myself about her. But truly, I should like to catch that expression. Toubac would willingly give me forty francs for it."

This jesting did not reassure me. The horrible glance of that old woman pursued me everywhere. When I climbed the perpendicular ladder to my garret, I imagined that she was crouching somewhere in the darkness, waiting to catch me by my coat tails and pull me backward.

I related these fancies to Toubac, who, far from laughing, gravely said, "Take care, Master Christian. Beware of this old woman. Her teeth are sharp, pointed, and of marvellous whiteness, which is not natural at her age. They say she has the evil eye, the children fly from her, and the people call her the Flittermouse, or bat."

I admired the perspicacity of the Jew, and his words gave me food for reflection. But after some weeks, having frequently met the Flittermouse without any evil consequences, my fears disappeared, and I thought no more about her.

Well, one evening when I was sleeping a heavy, dreamless sleep, I was awakened by a strange harmony, a sweet melodious vibration, like the breeze sighing among the leaves. I listened a long time, almost breathless, afraid to move for fear of losing this tremulous musical sound. Finally I turned toward my window, and saw two wings beating against the glass. At first I thought it was a bat caught in my room; then the moonbeams gleaming on the transparent filigree of the wings showed me a magnificent "butterfly of the night." Sometimes the vibrations were so rapid that I could scarcely distinguish them, then the rhythmic movement would cease and the creature would repose upon the glass like a delicate tracery of lace.

This aerial apparition in the silence of the night thrilled my heart with sweet emotions. It seemed to

me some pitying angel, touched by my solitude, come to soothe my loneliness, and the thought softened me to tenderness and tears.

"Rest tranquil, sweet captive," I said, "I will not retain thee against thy will. Return to liberty and Heaven." I opened my little window. The night was calm, millions of stars sparkled in the sky. One instant I contemplated this sublime spectacle, the words of prayer naturally trembling on my lips, when, imagine my amazement and horror, on lowering my eyes, I saw a man hanged to the rod which supported the sign of the Bœuf-Gras, his straggling hair, stiff arms, and legs stretched to a point, casting a gigantic shadow on the street below.

The immobility of that figure in the cold moonlight was something frightful. I tried to cry out, my tongue seemed frozen in my mouth, my teeth clashed against each other. I do not know what mysterious power drew my eyes to the shadowy depths beyond, where I dimly saw the old woman crouching at her window contemplating the hanged man with diabolical satisfaction.

I was seized with terror. All my strength failed me, and I recoiled against the wall and fell on my bed unconscious. How long I remained in this death-like sleep I do not know. When I came to myself, it was broad day, and my hair was wet with the dews of the night. A confused noise came up from the street below. I looked out. The burgomaster and his secretary were standing before the door of the inn. People were coming and going; some would stop a moment to look, then continue on their way. The good women of the neighborhood, sweeping before their doors, gazed up and down the street, and talked among themselves. At last a litter, and upon that litter a body covered by a woollen cloth, came out of the inn, borne by two men. As they went down the street, the children ran behind them. Then the crowd dispersed, and all was quiet.

The window of the inn in front of me was still open. A bit of rope hung from the rod of the sign board. It was not a dream. I had seen the "butterfly of the night"—the hanged man—and the old woman crouching at her window.

Toubac made me a visit that day. As soon as his great nose was on a level with my floor, he cried out, "Master Christian, have you anything for me?"

Seated upon my only chair, my hands on my knees, my eyes fixed on vacancy, I paid no attention to him. Surprised at my silence, Toubac called still louder, "Master Christian!" Then striding across my loft, he slapped me on the shoulder: "Ach Himmel! What's the matter with you?"

"Ah! Is that you, Toubac?"

"Well, I should think so. Are you sick?"

"No, I am thinking."

"What in the devil are you thinking of?"

"Of the hanged man."

"Ah! ah!" cried the old second-hand dealer, "then you saw him. Poor boy, what a strange story; the third one in the same place!"

"How? The third?" I exclaimed.

"Yes. I should have told you, but it is time enough yet; there will be the fourth to follow his example."

As Toubac spoke, he seated himself on the edge of my chest, and lighting his pipe sent trailings of blue smoke along the bare walls.

"Mein Gott!" he continued; "I am not a coward, but before I would pass a night in that room, I would go and hang myself elsewhere. Just think of it, Master Christian; nine or ten months ago, a good man from Terbingen, fat and jolly, a dealer in furs, stopped at the Bœuf-Gras, demanding supper and lodging. He ate well, drank well; they put him to sleep in that chamber, the green chamber, as they call it. Next morning he was found hanged to the rod of the sign board. Well, if he were the only one, there would be little more to tell. The coroner was summoned, and they buried him in the strangers' grave at the end of the garden.

"But about six weeks afterward, a brave soldier from Neustadt came along. He had his definite discharge in his pocket, and was so happy at the thought of seeing his native village again. All the evening as he emptied his beer glass he talked of nothing but his home, and the dear little cousin waiting to marry him. At last they put this brave man to bed, and that same

night, as the watchman passed along the Minnesinger, he perceived something on the rod of the sign board. He raised his lantern, and there hung this brave soldier, his definite discharge in his pocket, his hands pressed close to his thighs as if he were on parade.

"'Bless my soul,' said the burgomaster. 'This is extraordinary. What can it mean?'

"They examined the chamber, replastered the walls, and sent a mortuary report to Neustadt of 'sudden death.' All Nuremburg was indignant against the innkeeper. Some wanted to force him to take down his iron rod, saying it inspired people with dangerous ideas. But old Nikel Schmidt would not hear of it.

"'That rod,' said he, 'was put up there by my grandfather. It has carried the sign of the Bœuf-Gras for more than a hundred years. It has done no harm to any one, not even to the hay wagons that pass under it. All those who don't want to look at it can turn their heads.'

"Well, the excitement passed away, and for many months there was nothing new. Unhappily a student from Heidelberg, on his way from the University, stopped at the Bœuf-Gras day before yesterday. He was the son of a pastor. Now do you suppose the son of a pastor would think of hanging himself on the rod of a sign board, just because a great Meinherr and a brave soldier had hanged themselves there? You must acknowledge, Master Christian, it is not reasonable. Ah, well——"

"Stop! stop!" I cried. "There is some frightful mystery under all this. It is not the rod, it is not the chamber."

"What! do you suspect the innkeeper, one of the most honest men in the world, belonging to one of the oldest families of Nuremberg?"

"No. God preserve me from unjust suspicions, but there are depths of darkness we cannot fathom."

"You are right," said Toubac, astonished at my excitement. "Let us talk of something better, Master Christian,—of our landscape."

This brought me back to reality, the affair was soon arranged, and Toubac descended the ladder very well satisfied, charging me to think no more of the student

of Heidelberg. I would most willingly have followed his counsel, but when the devil mixes himself up in our affairs, it is not easy to be rid of him.

II.

Alone in the solitude of my room, this strange story returned to my mind with frightful pertinacity.

"The old woman," I said, "is the cause of all this. She alone has conceived and consummated these crimes. But by what means? Has she resorted to artifice, or the assistance of supernatural powers?"

I walked up and down my narrow loft, a voice within me crying out: "It was not in vain that Heaven permitted you to see the Flittermouse contemplating the agony of her victim. It was not in vain that the soul of the poor young man came to you in the form of a butterfly of the night. No, it was not in vain. Heaven has imposed a terrible task upon you, Christian, and if you do not accomplish it, take care! You will fall into the toils of the old woman yourself. Perhaps at this moment she is weaving her net in the shadowy darkness."

For many days these frightful thoughts pursued me without ceasing. I could not sleep. It was impossible to work; the brush fell from my hand, and—horrible to say—I frequently found myself viewing the iron rod with complacency.

At last I could stand it no longer. One evening I leaped down my ladder, four steps at a time, ran out into the street, and crouched behind the door of Flittermouse to surprise her fatal secret.

From this time, there was not a day that I was not in the streets, watching the old woman, never letting her out of my sight; but she was so crafty, and had such subtle instincts, that, without turning her head, she knew when I was following her and caught me at all my schemes. Nevertheless she pretended not to see me, would go and return from the market like any good woman, only now and then she would hasten her steps, and mutter confused words to herself.

At the end of a month, I saw that it was impossible to attain my end by this means, and the conviction filled me with inexpressible sadness.

"What must I do? The old woman divines my projects; she is always on guard; everything fails me; the old vixen already believes that I am at the end of my rope. What must I do?"

As I asked myself this question, a bright thought came into my head. My attic overlooked the dwelling of the Flittermouse, but there was no window on that side of my room. I lightly raised one of the slates of my roof, and could scarcely contain my joy; the whole interior of the old building was open to my view. "At last I have you," I cried; "you cannot escape me now. From here I can see all your movements, the habits of the fox in his den. You will not suspect this invisible eye, this eye that will surprise your crime at the moment of consummation. Oh, justice marches slowly, but surely."

Nothing could be more sinister than the interior of this old building. A dark court, paved with greenish mouldy slabs; in one corner a pool of sickening, stagnant water; a rickety stairway leading to a gallery with a wooden railing; on this railing old clothes, rags, and the empty case of a worn mattress. On the first floor to the left was a stone sink, indicating the kitchen; on the right, were high windows looking upon the street, with some pots of withered flowers on the sills. Everything was gloomy, dilapidated, and mouldering. The sun never penetrated the depths of this court, never brightened the old cracked walls, the worm-eaten gallery, or dust-tarnished windows. It was truly an asylum for bats. Flittermouse must have been well pleased.

I had scarcely finished these observations when the old woman entered. She had returned from the market. I heard the heavy door grind on its hinges, then Flittermouse appeared with her basket. She seemed fatigued, and out of breath; and she held to the banisters as she climbed the stairs.

It was suffocatingly hot, and one of those days when the insects come out of their hiding-places and fill the air with their rasping sounds. The old woman softly crossed the gallery like a ferret. Spying a struggling fly, she caught and delicately presented it to a bloated spider squatting in a corner of the gallery, then passed

into the kitchen, returned in a few minutes, shook out the old clothes on the railing, made a few strokes with her broom on the steps, then suddenly raised her head, her green eyes searchingly scanning my roof.

By what strange intuition did she suspect something? I could not tell, but I softly lowered the slate, and gave up the position of spy for that day.

For six weeks I could discover nothing singular in the Flittermouse; sometimes she would peel her potatoes, sometimes spread her linen on the railing, sometimes spin a little; but she never sang, as is the custom of good old women, whose quavering voices blend so well with the buzzing of the wheel.

Silence reigned around her; not a sparrow came to light on her window sill; the pigeons in flying over her court seemed to spread their wings with greater velocity. Everything shunned her. Only the spider seemed pleased in her society.

You cannot conceive of my patience in these long hours of watching; nothing escaped me; at the least noise I would raise my slate, stimulated by curiosity and indefinable fear.

In the mean time Toubac complained:

"Master Christian, how in the devil do you pass your time? In other days you gave me something every week. Now it is scarcely one a month. Ah, these painters! It is a true saying, 'Idle as a painter.' As soon as they get a few kreutzers in their pocket, they go to sleep."

I began to lose courage myself. In spite of all my spying and watching, I could discover nothing extraordinary. I said, "The old woman can't be so very dangerous after all. Perhaps I am wrong to suspect her." I found myself making many excuses for her, when one evening with my eye to my hole I abandoned all these benevolent reflections.

The scene suddenly changed. Flittermouse passed across the gallery like a flash. She was no longer the same. Her back was straight, her head erect, her jaws were firmly set, she walked with a quick step, her gray hair floating behind her. "Oh, ho," I said, "something has happened."

That night, when the noise of the city had died

away, when silence and mystery had settled on the old dwelling, I threw myself on my pallet and suddenly saw that the window in front of me was lighted; a traveller occupied the green chamber, the chamber of the hanged. Then all my fears returned; the agitation of Flittermouse was explained; she scented a victim.

I slept no more that night; the rustling of a straw, the nibbling of a mouse under the floor, made me shiver. I got up, perched myself at my window, and listened. The light in front of me was finally extinguished, but a moment before, whether it were reality or illusion, I thought I saw the old vixen also waiting and listening. I watched through the long hours until the gray dawn lay on city and distant hill. Then, worn out with fatigue and excitement, I slept, but my sleep was short; by eight o'clock I was at my post of observation.

It appeared that the night of Flittermouse had not been more peaceful than mine. When she opened the door on the gallery, a livid pallor covered her face and meagre neck; she had on only her chemise and a woolen petticoat, and her gray hair was tumbling on her shoulders. She looked over to my side with a dreamy air, but saw nothing; she was thinking of other things. Suddenly she descended, leaving her old shoes at the top of the stairs, no doubt to assure herself that the lower door was securely fastened; she quickly ascended the stairs, leaping three or four steps at a time —it was frightful. She darted into a neighboring room, I heard something like the opening of a great chest, then Flittermouse appeared on the gallery dragging a manikin behind her—and the manikin was dressed like the student of Heidelberg.

The old woman with surprising dexterity suspended this frightful object to a beam overhead, then she descended to contemplate her work from the court. A peal of abrupt laughter escaped her lips. She ascended and descended again and again like a maniac, every time uttering new cries and fresh bursts of laughter.

A noise was heard in the street: the old woman bounded forward, unhooked the manikin, carried it away, returned, and, leaning on the banister, her neck

stretched, her eyes gleaming, she listened intently. The noise passed by, the muscles of her face relaxed, she drew a sigh of relief. It was only a passing carriage. Evidently the old vixen was frightened. Then she re-entered the chamber, and I heard the lid of the chest closed.

This strange scene amazed me. What did the manikin mean? I became more watchful than ever.

Soon after this Flittermouse went out with her basket. I watched her to the turn of the street. She had retaken her air of trembling old age, walked with tottering steps, turning from time to time to see if any one noticed her.

She remained out five long hours, while I restlessly tramped up and down my loft. To me the time was insupportable; the sun beating down on my roof seemed to scorch my brain.

I saw the good man who occupied the fatal chamber sitting at his window, calmly smoking his pipe. He was a good-natured looking peasant from Nassau, with a three-cornered hat and a scarlet waistcoat, and evidently had no thought of harm. I wanted to cry out, "Take care, my good man; beware of the old woman."

But he would not have understood me.

In about two hours Flittermouse returned. I heard the closing of the great heavy door. Then she appeared in the court, seated herself on the lower step of the stairs, and placed her enormous basket before her. At first she drew out some packages of herbs and vegetables, then a scarlet waistcoat, a folded three-cornered hat, plush breeches, a pair of long woollen stockings—the exact costume of the peasant from Nassau.

I had a revelation, flames actually passed before my eyes. I recalled those precipices which draw you with irresistible power, wells you feel forced to throw yourself into, depths of darkness you dare not gaze upon for fear of being drawn into their rayless gloom. I remembered the contagion of suicide and murder, the fantastic allurement of example, which makes you yawn when others yawn, suffer when you see others suffer, and take your life because you see another take his life. My hair stood on end with horror.

How the Flittermouse, this low, degraded creature,

had been able to divine this profound law of nature, I could not conceive. How she had found means to make it subservient to her sanguinary instincts, I could not understand. Without reflecting any further upon this strange mystery, I determined to turn this fatal law against herself, to draw the old vixen into her own trap; so many innocent victims were crying for vengeance.

I immediately started to carry out my plans, ran to all the old clothes dealers of Nuremberg, and late that evening arrived at the Bœuf Gras with a great bundle under my arm.

Nickel Schmidt knew me well. I had painted the portrait of his wife.

"Ah, Master Christian; what happy circumstance has procured me the pleasure of seeing you?"

"Well, to tell the truth, Master Schmidt, I have a desire to pass a night in that chamber." As we were standing at the door of the inn, I pointed above to the green room. The good man gave me a suspicious glance.

"Do not be afraid," I said, "I have no thought of hanging myself."

"Ah, that is well. It would be a great pity to lose a painter of your talents. When do you want the room, Master Christian?"

"To-night."

"It is impossible; it is occupied."

"The gentleman can have it immediately," said a voice behind us; "I don't want it any longer."

We turned around much surprised. It was the peasant from Nassau, his great three-cornered hat on the back of his head, his bundle on the end of his stick. He had heard the story of the three suicides, and was fairly trembling with rage.

"Rooms like yours'" he stammered, "ought to—ought to—it's murder—assassination—you deserve to be sent to the galleys."

"Come, come; be quiet," said the innkeeper. "It has not prevented you from sleeping well."

"No, thank God! I said my prayers last night; if it had not been for that, where would I be? Where would I be?" and he went off holding up his hands to heaven,

"Ah, well," said Master Schmidt, very much astonished, "the chamber is vacant, but you are not going to play me a bad trick, I hope."

"It would be worse for me than for you, my dear sir."

I handed my package to the servant and took my place among the drinkers. I had not felt so calm and happy for a long time. After so much anxiety, I seemed to be nearing the end, the clouds were breaking, some invisible power seemed upholding me.

I lighted my pipe, emptied my glass of beer, and leaning my elbow on the table listened to a band playing in the Strasse. Lost in a kind of dreamy wakefulness, I would every now and then note the hour, and ask myself if the weary past was not a dream. But when the watchman warned us that it was time to leave the hall, other and more serious thoughts filled my mind, as I followed the little maid who preceded me with a lighted candle.

III.

We ascended to the third story. Placing the light in my hand, she pointed to a door, saying "There it is," and hastily descended the stairs.

Opening the door, I found the green room like all other rooms of an inn, the ceiling very low, the bed very high. I explored it at a glance, and glided to the window. Nothing was yet to be seen at the house of Flittermouse, only in a long obscure chamber a dim light was burning.

"That is well," said I, closing the curtains. "I have sufficient time."

I opened my package, took out a woman's bonnet with deep hanging lace, and put it on, and placing myself before the glass I began with a sharp-pointed brush to trace my face with wrinkles. This took me nearly an hour, and when I put on the robe and great flowered shawl, I was actually afraid of myself. There was Flittermouse looking at me from the depths of the glass.

Just then the watchman cried, "Eleven o'clock!" I quickly took out the manikin I had brought, dressed

it in the costume of the old woman, and placed it near the window.

After all I had seen of the old vixen's craftiness, her infernal cunning, and artful deviltry, nothing would have surprised me. I parted the curtains and waited in some trepidation.

The dim light I had noticed in that long, dismal chamber cast its yellowish rays on the manikin of the Nassau peasant. It was cowering at the foot of the bed, the head hanging upon the breast, the three-cornered hat drawn over the face, the arms dragging as if plunged in the depths of despair.

The light was managed with such diabolical skill that only part of the figure appeared, but the red waistcoat with its great buttons was plainly visible. This motionless, pathetic figure in the silence of night struck the imagination with wonderful power. Even I, although forewarned, felt cold shivers down my back. How then would it be with a poor countryman, unexpectedly confronted with this dismal spectre? He would become so terrified that he would lose all self-control, and the spirit of imitation would do the rest.

I could see Flittermouse crouching in the shadowy darkness, but was careful not to let her see me. Softly opening the curtains, I raised the manikin and made it appear as if it were advancing toward her. Then suddenly, seizing a light, I threw the window wide open and stood in full view of the old vixen, *the living image of herself.*

In her amazement she dropped the manikin of the peasant and looked at me in stupefied terror. A horrible pantomime commenced. She extended her finger —I extended mine; her lips trembled—I made mine tremble; she leaned forward—I did the same. I cannot describe this frightful scene. It was like the madness of delirium and insanity. It was a struggle between two wills, two minds, two souls, which should conquer the other, and in that struggle I had the advantage, for the poor victims in shapes of horror aided me.

After imitating the movements of Flittermouse for a few moments, I drew a rope from under my petticoat, and fastened it to the rod of the sign board.

The old woman watched me with gaping mouth as I passed the rope around my neck, her wild-beast eyes gleaming, her features convulsed.

"No, no," she cried in a stifled voice.

I continued with the coolness of an executioner.

Then she was seized with a fit of rage; clinching the window-sill with her hands, she howled:

"Old fool—old fool."

I did not give her time to finish; suddenly extinguishing my light, I bent down like one about to take a sudden leap, and seizing the manikin I had already prepared, I dashed it into space.

A terrible cry from across the street, then all was silent.

I listened a long time, great drops of sweat beading my brow; then I heard far, far away in the distance the voice of the watchman crying: "Past twelve o'clock!"

"Now justice is done," I murmured; "the three victims are avenged. God pardon me!"

Just a moment after the cry of the watchman I had seen the old woman leap from her window, a rope around her neck, and hang suspended from the iron rod, her body writhing in the contortions of death. And the calm, silent moon, looking over the high, pointed roof, cast her cold, pale rays on the distorted face and long, floating hair.

Just as I saw the poor young man, I now saw the Flittermouse.

Next day all Nuremberg knew the bat had hanged herself. It was the last event of that kind on the Strasse Minnesinger.

Not exactly idyllic—there is too much ticker and stock exchange in it for that—but the broker was most beautifully caught, and the story of his wooing, as told by Nym Crinkle in the N. Y. *Sunday World*, is a very interesting romance.

THE BROAD STREET TURN.

BURT CLINY HALSTED, broker, Broad Street, turned over a new leaf on a New Year. I met him at Dr. Hall's church in the morning. He had a reformed look in the corner of his eyes. "I am through," he said in a calm, business-like manner.

Everything that Cline did was done in a business-like manner, whether it was purchasing bouquets to send to Belle Urquhart or having his bald head shampooed. I've known him to get off a car and chase a newsboy for two blocks to get a cent change, because it was business and he would not be swindled, and I have known him to write a note to Ned Harrigan to get a free box and then spend two hundred dollars on flowers and supper before the night was over. With a Broad Street peculiarity he insisted that that was business too.

I believe that anywhere Cline would be called a good fellow. He held strictly to the business principle of skinning his fellow man alive on Broad Street and blowing in a pile when the boys were not on that financial warpath.

One day, Cline, as I said, turned a leaf. He did it methodically, calculatingly and firmly. He was polishing his dome before the glass, and as he laid the brush down he said, "I must get married."

Everything in that bachelor room was astonished. The alabaster bather who had stood bent over in the corner for a year prepared to take a header into the turquoise cuspidor, gave a little start, as if her mission were done. The bronze Venus actually turned her bronze head a little, as if looking for a sea to go back to, and a whole row of dead boutonnieres fell off the mantel with a perfumed gasp.

All this was with what Cline himself would have called a "dead calculation." He proposed to sail the sea of

matrimony. He had been living for fifteen or twenty years what Matthew Arnold would have called a *not* wife life. The other sort of thing would be cheaper.

Besides, when a bachelor can't comb his top hair over any more he begins to think about getting tone. It was business.

Very punctilious and discreet was Cline. He proposed to get married just as he proposed to buy Nashville and Tennessee. It was a good investment.

Then he set about it in the most extraordinary Broad Street manner. "I don't want," said he, "any giddy beauties around. They've been around till I'm tired. I want a mature, sensible, sober, economical, tidy, level-headed, modest, healthy, good-tempered, prudent, affectionate, sagacious, lovable, motherly, genteel, sterling woman. Girls be blowed! Girls make me weary, and I'm going to organize the business of getting what I want. I can give an hour a day for the next year to the finding of what I want, and I'm too old a business hand to have what I don't want."

When you get one of these financial Broad Street intellects squarely down to business, he knows what he is about and he doesn't make any mistake.

If he is going to get a wife or get a cemetery plot, he is going to get the worth of his money.

So Cline at forty-four organized himself. He set up a matrimonial bureau in that private office with cathedral windows; put his number eleven gaiter on sentiment; chucked the forget-me-nots out of his soul and came down to hard-pan.

He would advertise. Yes, he would. No nonsensical rot about cultured gent desiring to meet cultured lady, but straight business proposition. It would involve immense clerical system—very well, would get typewriter, dictate answers for an hour every morning.

"First thing to do—get typewriter; must be business girl—girl bad—but have to put up with it—no women typewriters in the market, all girls, d—n shame."

II.

One morning there came to Cline's general office in Broad Street a girl in a baby waist, with a pearl-gray pelisse over her shoulders and a cornelian ring on her

finger. One of Cline's young men noticed her first standing by the door. He told me afterward that what he noticed was the absurd chip sailor hat with a blue ribbon and an anchor on it, and he wondered if she hadn't borrowed it from her little brother to come downtown in; it set up so perky and saucily on top of her ridiculous wad of brown hair, as if she might be a lieutenant in the Salvation Army.

It's astonishing what things these young idiots notice.

He went round and said, "What can we do for you, madam?"

"Madam" is a kind of official squelcher kept for girls who venture away from their proper salesrooms to where young men can get back at them and pay them off in their own coin.

"I am a typewriter," said chip hat, very meekly. "I came to answer an advertisement."

Then they directed her into the little office with cathedral windows, using a sign language of their own and telegraphing to each other by winks, one of them even whistling a few bars, pianissimo, of "When the Robins Nest Again." Then they saw the chip hat go through the fatal glass door on the other side of which Cline kept his grim official severity.

III.

He was signing checks. It was one of the most serious moments of his life. He looked up and saw the chip hat cocked on top of the brown hair. It aggravated him just a little, as if a deacon should see one of the New York ballet girls in his country church and she should bow to him sweetly. He leaned back in his cathedral chair, stuck his legs out straight and fastened his commercial eye on his check book.

"Well, young woman" (chip hats that are "darlings" in front of the Bijou are always "young women" in Broad street), "I want a discreet confidential secretary to answer correspondents. She's got to be here at ten o'clock every morning, attend to business strictly, and she can't get away till two or three. The salary is twelve dollars a week. Do you think you can get down to that kind of drudgery for that pittance and keep the business in this room?"

All that Cline ever heard was a demure little "Yes, sir," that had the same suggestion of tremolo in it that one gets from a fresh raspberry jelly.

"All right. I can't bother with you to-day; come to-morrow," and Cline fell to signing checks and chip hat went away, and the young man outside poked his nose through the crystal portal of his barrier, puckered his lips and flipped two or three bars of "The Maid with the Milking Pail" after her.

IV.

The little office with the cathedral windows took on a new feature. There was an instrument under the sash, with a black tin roof over it, and a little sailor hat, with a blue ribbon on it, hung on the bronze peg opposite the door.

"Now, then," said Cline, putting on a most forbidding air of strict business. "You understand that the matter for which I have engaged you is entirely aside from the regular business of this office. By the way, what shall I call you? Miss what? Chalcey? Well, never mind the Nelly. I'll call you Miss Chalcey, it's more business like; and I don't want you to talk outside of this room about any of the business you have to transact here. Do you understand? If you get that straight to begin with there'll be no trouble."

Then she turned her demure face toward him and said, "Yes, sir," so meekly and patiently and profoundly that he noticed her eyes. They were agates—moss-agates, by Jove. Funny little spots in them that swam and danced round and melted into each other in the most absurdly molten way, as if there might be little caldrons under them where the light was boiled and softened down into some ridiculous girl nonsense. The worst of it was they always seemed to be just on the point of boiling over, as if light, like music, had some kind of inscrutable pathos in it.

V.

So they got along very nicely without any nonsense. Cline would come in about half past ten or eleven, look to see if the sailor hat was hanging on the peg,

grunt out, "Good morning, Miss Chalcey," and then sit down at his desk to open letters. Sometimes she would sit demurely for half an hour, her head turned, looking out of the one clear little pane in the cathedral window straight at Bob Slocum's gothic office opposite, where there was never anything to see except Bob Slocum's window shades, and that piece of telegraph tape that dangled forever from the wires overhead, in spite of all the sparrows that had tried to pull it off. At other times Cline would dictate, and then the click of the instrument drowned the monotonous chirp of the janitor's bullfinch that was whistling somewhere.

Of course she got to know all about it—what it was he was trying to do—and he grew to consult her on some of the details. Like a good girl she put her whole heart into it and really tried to help him all she could to find the wife he wanted. How could she help it, and then, too, she couldn't help finding out by degrees that Cline drew some heavy checks and had a swell circle of acquaintances.

And he—well, he, like a good, methodical business man, fell into a routine here as elsewhere. His heart was constructed on solid clock-work business principles, and one morning when he came in the sailor hat was not on the peg. It annoyed him at once. It always does annoy a business man to have things irregular. He fidgeted in his chair. It was too bad. Nobody could be depended on, and here were several letters to be answered. He called Swain in. "Where is that young woman?"

Swain started a little, as if he felt guilty of having abducted her, and said, "What do you want, a typewriter? Here's Wallace and Durea and Clapp, any one of 'em can——"

And Cline shouted, "Nonsense! Shut the door!"

Then he noticed the bronze peg. It had an ironical and plucked aspect.

He sat down in the chair by the window and looked at Bob Slocum's shades.

He couldn't help wondering what Miss Chalcey found to think about during all the vacant hours when she looked out there, waitingly.

The next day when she came he reprimanded her

fiercely. "It annoyed me very much," he said from his chair, without looking round. "You should have sent me some word. I depended on you. It's very irregular and unbusiness-like."

She turned round and looked at him in her meek way. "My mother is dying," she said. "I have neglected her to-day so as not to disappoint you."

His astonishment twisted him round in his chair, and he came plump up against the agates, swimming in some kind of light he had never seen before.

"Confound it, Miss Chalcey?" he said, jumping up. "What do you mean by having a sick mother and not telling me? What do you mean by coming here to-day? Will you never get any business ideas into your head? I told you that this room was to be confidential. Do you call it confidential to act in this manner? I'm surprised, Miss Chalcey. I'm hurt."

He took down the sailor hat. "You are to go back to your mother—at once."

He opened the door. "Here, Swain, get me a coupé." And Swain saw the sailor hat in his hand.

VI.

It was about a week after this. The room had half a ton of letters in it. Cline used to come in, look at the bronze peg and go away again. Then the sailor hat reappeared.

Miss Chalcey was there waiting, so was her little lunch that she always ate when Cline and Wallace went down to Delmonico's, and on Cline's desk was a tiny bunch of violets. He shook hands with her, congratulated her on her mother's recovery and said: "Pshaw! don't mention it, my child. I'm just about as kind as the average business man—no more, no less. We've got a terrible lot of business here."

They both laughed!

Cline was in particularly good spirits that morning. It was so comfortable, don't you know, to have the office routine go on in its regular business-like way—to hear the click of the instrument; to get side glimpses of two white rounded wrists dancing a gallopade; to know that the chip hat was covering up that infernal

bronze peg, and you couldn't hear the devilish bull-finch. It went on about a week, with a little bunch of violets every morning on his desk, which he always put in his buttonhole when he went uptown. There were two days when he hadn't got a pin, and she had, and so she fastened them on for him, and there was one awfully nasty day when he actually helped her eat her lunch, and enjoyed it.

Then the whole affair came to a sudden stop. These things always do in real life.

It was a Monday morning. She had hung up her hat and dusted off her machine and looked to see if Bob Slocum's shades were there, when Cline said, with a horribly sad expression of countenance:

"Miss Chalcey, you've been a very faithful and efficient secretary, and I'm sorry I've got to lose you, but the fact is I've found the woman I want, and of course I shall not need you any more."

She was looking at him dreamily, as if she wondered where the paragon came from that filled his bill.

"Yes," he said, "strange as it may sound I've actually picked out the woman who is to be my wife, and I shall not want a secretary. We've had a very pleasant time here together, haven't we?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you remember all the qualities that I was fool enough to expect in one woman?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I've found most of 'em."

"I'm very glad, sir."

"Do you think, Miss Chalcey, from what you know of me that she will have me if I ask her?"

"Yes, sir."

"You truly think so on business principles?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then, by Jove, I'll marry her. You can consider yourself discharged Miss Chalcey—Nelly."

And she was.

The only unbusiness-like thing they did was to both try to look out the ridiculous little pane at the same time—and no two business people could do that simultaneously without looking like Siamese twins.

War, woman, and song—what more fitting themes can there be for the romancer's pen? And this story of a dreadful war, a most heroic woman, and a spirit-stirring song, which was written by Henry Herman for the *English Illustrated Magazine*, is a romance.

THE MARSEILLAISE.

I.

PARIS was dancing, Paris was gay. Paris, the light-hearted queen, had decked herself in fine linen, and was more joyous, madder, more reckless than ever in this year of the empire's great exhibition, 1867. From the gardens of the Tuileries, where hundreds of softly-glowing lamps shone amid the summer fragrance of myriads of blossoms, and where the golden bees of imperial France swarmed over a thousand gilded spikes, across the Place de la Concorde, where the spray of the fountains twinkled like a diamond foam with the reflection of the rows of lights, along the Champs Elysées, where the painted singers bawled and clowns danced behind festoons of roses, the merry throng on pleasure bent, and living for pleasure only, surged in a never-ceasing flood. The sturdy Provençal was there with his wife and his daughters, and his daughters' daughters. The Breton and Norman were there; the good people of Tours and Bordeaux had sent their representatives, the Jura and the Alps their mountaineers, and Finisterre its fishermen. The empire was peace, and to these people it meant peace—peace with prosperity. From the Rhine to the Atlantic, from the Channel to the Mediterranean, France was gay and happy, and imperial Paris gayer than all.

The great boulevards were as alive with pleasure as the Champs Elysées—the terraced rows of little tables and chairs occupied by a throng of loiterers, thoughtless of the past and unheeding the future, the continuous stream of passers-by intent on witnessing only the general enjoyment. Here and there a care-pinched face or a pair of hungry eyes flitted past the idler who was toying with his ice or sipping his gloria; but what

was that starving unit in the midst of myriads living in boisterous plenty? The pinched face would become more drawn and the staring eyes look hungrier in a week or two, and ere long the grave would swallow the lot and remove the offal from the path of the nervous, delicate people who did not care to be shocked by the parade of such ridiculous sensationalism. A poor mother somewhere out in the regions of Clignancourt might ring her hands and wipe her tears, or a pale-faced widow on the heights of Montmartre might look vacantly at a quarter of a dozen of hungry brats. "Take them away; let somebody look after them," the good people from Tarascon, from Bordeaux, from Rouen, would say. When everything was so bright it was a bother to be reminded that there were people miserable in the world. Therefore they ate and they drank, and they danced and they sang, and the clinking of glasses and melodious waltzes, played by a hundred orchestras, drowned the cries of despair which every now and then stabbed the heterogeneous revelry. Thus the priests of Moloch filled the air with the sounds of brass trumpets to drown the shrieks of the fiery idol's victims.

A man and a woman were walking painfully and slowly along the wide, thronged pavement of the big boulevards. He was tall and old—old and weak and lame; his white hair floated in thick locks over his shoulders, his white beard covered his breast like a silvery, silken wave, his big bushy eyebrows were white, and a great shaggy white mustache covered his upper lip. His face was nearly as white as his beard—haggard, pinched, and drawn—and it looked whiter than it was by reason of the pair of piercing, sparkling black eyes that shone from their deeply-sunken sockets. He was dressed in the remnants of garments that had once been a gentleman's, but were now ragged, worn, and mended. In one long, thin, sinewy hand, on which the veins stood out like blue cords, he held a violin; the other grasped a stick, by the aid of which he dragged himself along. The girl by his side was full forty years his junior—tall, lithe, thin, and bony like the old man, an unshaped and uncouth figure that was ill-hidden beneath a dark shawl and a loosely-hanging dark skirt. She was bareheaded, and her partly disheveled glossy,

wavy, raven-black hair fell in rebellious bands over her neck and part of her back. The lips were thin, the face was thin and white, and there was little promise of beauty about it but for the eyes—coal-black like the man's—that sparkled and flashed at moments with a mysterious fire.

The pair were slouching along, looking to the right and looking to the left, gazing with searching eyes at the groups of well-to-do people who sat in front of the cafés, and who ate and who drank and were happy and not hungry. For they *were* hungry. She was a singer, a street singer, and the old man, her father, accompanied her, and they had not earned a sou that day. All along the boulevards the crowd was so thick and the police so imperative that there was no chance of asking, of pleading, of begging, to be allowed to amuse the ladies and gentlemen who were already so well amused. They therefore turned round the corner from the boulevards into the Rue de Faubourg Montmartre, and thence onward, slowly and painfully, toward the artists' quarter. Nearly at the bottom of the Rue des Martyrs there stood a little café, which was not overcrowded.

In the outer room, open to the street, a dozen or so of people were drinking and smoking. The place looked not too rich, for it was not the rich that in boisterous Paris helped such poor as these.

"Let us wait here a while, father," said the girl; "perhaps these people will let me sing to them."

"I don't know," replied the old man. "We may try, but we must wait till the proprietor comes by. I know him by sight; it's fat Mathieu. I'll ask him then."

They stood in the shadow by the side of the café and waited anxiously.

While the two singers waited at the door for permission to amuse the people in the place, some five or six young men were seated around the table in the smaller room at the back of the café.

They were singing "The Marseillaise;" they were singing it under their breath, barely humming it. Rouget de l'Isle's glorious air was prohibited in imperial France, and the young people in the room were looking at one another with daring eyes, while their hearts yearned

and their fingers itched to be allowed to stand up and shout the song of freedom to the world. Quietly, measuredly, smiling at each other in half wonderment, they felt the words trip on their tongues, and as one inspiring phrase succeeded another the voices became louder and the air more distinct to the people outside. The old man and the girl pricked up their ears.

"They are singing 'The Marseillaise,'" whispered the girl.

"They are," replied the old man. "Would to Heaven I were allowed to sing it."

Then two or three passers-by stopped and listened in wonder; and the fat proprietor of the little café heard the sounds and peered out anxiously, and then rushed back with a pale face and stood at the open door of the little room wringing his hands.

"But, Messieurs, for Heaven's sake, what are you doing?" he cried. "You are singing 'The Marseillaise.' You will all be imprisoned. I shall be imprisoned. My place will be shut up. I shall be ruined."

He was greeted with a burst of laughter.

"You shall not be ruined, my good Mathieu," said one of the young men, a slim, dark, delicate young fellow, with long black hair and wiry black mustache, looking through his eye-glass at the frightened face of Mathieu. "We will not sing 'The Marseillaise' since you do not wish it—at least we will not sing it loud enough to be heard by the police spies outside."

"If you will only do that, gentlemen, I shall be so much obliged, I shall really," said the good man in a more pacified tone. "You have no idea how careful one has to be. Policemen are everywhere, and besides that, gentlemen, what's the use of singing a stupid revolutionary song when we are all so contented and happy?"

The young man with the wiry black mustache dropped his eye-glass and looked at the host.

"My good Mathieu," he said, "you should speak about what you know. You understand all about coffee. Your absinthe is excellent, and you give as good a glass of brandy for four sous as one can expect in this expensive neighborhood; but don't meddle with politics; they are not in your line."

"You are quite right, Monsieur de Langlois," replied the man. "Politics are not in my line, and I don't want to meddle with them, although I have been in the National Guard and helped to put down the reds in the Faubourg Saint Antoine in '48, and got bitten in the hand by some hag of a woman because one of my comrades had shot her brother. You can see the mark yet where she bit me," he continued, showing his fat hand; "but I'm quite satisfied now. The Emperor has brought us good times and good business, and the Emperor does not like 'The Marseillaise.' That's enough for me."

He stood for a moment or two looking about proudly, as if he intended to witness the effect of his speech. The result was disappointing. They were all sitting round the table grinning good-naturedly. De Langlois gazed at him with abstracted good humor, and then said:

"Have you said all that you wanted to say, my good Mathieu?"

"Yes, Monsieur de Langlois, all."

"You are quite sure that you have nothing to add?"

"Not that I know of."

"Then, my good Mathieu, let me assure you that your powers of declamation are wasted here. You would make an excellent municipal councillor, and we will all vote for you if you will allow yourself to be nominated——"

"But, Monsieur——"

"No but, my good Mathieu; you have finished and so have I. Adieu for the present."

With that the young man rose, and, bowing in mock politeness, he shook the hand of the fat landlord with a warmth which the latter did not appreciate, although it made the young men in the room roar with laughter.

"Ah, my friends," said de Langlois, when the landlord was gone. "You think you are politicians in embryo. You are the budding geniuses who will give liberty to this fair, enslaved France of ours." His bright laughter rang through the room. "I'm a fool and you are fools. That man is a better politician than you or I will ever be. He knows what the people want. He does not want to hear 'The Marseillaise,'

and after all why should he? He is prosperous; what more does he want? Come, Paul; come, Gaston," he said, "let us go up to the outer boulevard. I am sick of this respectability and of this pretence of decency. I want to go where I can sing what I like, and not be heard by all the spies in the street."

"You will have to go far in that case," replied the fair young man whom de Langlois had addressed as Gaston. "The outer boulevards will afford you no more liberty than the Rue des Martyrs. But you are right; let us pay and leave this abyss of respectability behind us."

So saying, they all paid their scores and made for the street, the fair young man leading the way. A rather remarkable young fellow that Gaston Sevrier. A great, broad, square forehead, piercing eyes of a cold gray, a semi-aquiline nose, firm-set, thin lips, a fair beard and mustache, short cropped in the style of Vandyke, long fair hair, falling nearly as low as the shoulder, combined to command attention. Decision, firmness of character, great intelligence, artistic aspirations and inclinations were depicted there as plainly as nature could paint them. His black velvet jacket clothed a stoutly-built and well-knit frame, broad in the chest and the shoulders; the flush of glowing youth on his cheeks and his agile movements bespoke a healthful and vigorous mode of life.

At the door of the café the old man awaited them with anxious eye, hat in hand. The girl stood by her aged father's side, her white lips moving in mute appeal.

"Well, what do you want?" cried de Langlois, addressing the old man. "Begging is forbidden, you know. In this well-beloved city of Paris of ours you have the right to starve, my friend, but not to beg."

"I do not wish to beg, messieurs," stammered the war-bruised veteran of the battle of life; "I only wish you to permit my daughter to sing you a song; a pretty song, if you like, messieurs, or an amusing one—she can sing well, you know, messieurs—and she can be funny——"

"Poor little one," interrupted Sevrier; "she does not look at all inclined to amuse or be amused just now."

"And she is not very good-looking," broke in de Langlois ungallantly; "so she will not charm us in that way."

The girl's hungry eyes flashed and a hectic flush spread like a patch on either cold, grayish-pale cheek. She held out her thin little hands in tremulous beseeching.

"Do let me sing to you, messieurs," she pleaded. "I shall be satisfied with two or three sous; but I want——" She interrupted herself and paused with a feeble pride. Two or three sous meant bread, and she was so hungry and her old father was hungry; but confess it she dared not.

"Ah!" cried de Langlois, "you want two or three sous. I will tell you what I will do; I will give you a franc—two francs—if you will sing us the 'Marseillaise.'"

The girl looked hungrily at the two proffered coins. Her eyes dilated with a greedy fire and she stretched out a fumbling hand, but withdrew it again immediately.

"I dare not, messieurs," she gasped. "I am sorry, but I dare not. I will sing you any song you like, but not 'The Marseillaise.'"

"Ah, they would imprison you," retorted the young man with the wiry black mustache. "But don't you see, you young fool, if you were in prison they would have to feed you, while now you're starving. Anybody can see that. Here are two francs to be earned, and you're afraid to earn them."

"I am not afraid," replied the girl, looking first at de Langlois and then at her father; "but——"

"Sing?" interrupted the old man, approaching with his long white face, whiter than ever, and his fierce black eyes shining more savagely. "I will sing you 'The Marseillaise.'"

"You?" questioned the little crowd in chorus.

"Yes, I, messieurs," he answered, drawing up his long sparse figure and stroking back his great silver beard. "I sang pretty well once, and I have yearned to sing 'The Marseillaise' for ever so long. They thought they had taught me to forget it at Cayenne. But I have not forgotten it."

"At Cayenne?" de Langlois asked, while the others stood around in silent amazement.

"Yes, at Cayenne," the old man repeated. "The last time I sang, it was at the barricade on the big boulevard down yonder, when the good Emperor was made an Emperor and the bullets whistled among the bare branches of trees and killed the people—men women, and children—who stood gaping at the windows. We sang it then, messieurs, as the cuirassiers came swooping down, and the cuirassiers were so many and we were so few. I will sing it to you again."

"So you shall," cried de Langlois. "Bravo for you!"

"Not here, not here, messieurs," interrupted the fat Mathieu, who had been listening in a haggard fear and trembling. "Not here in front of my café; I beg, I entreat of you, messieurs. It will affect my business, messieurs, have pity on a poor man."

"Oh, we will have pity," sneered de Langlois. "We will have pity and 'The Marseillaise' as well. Come, brave old man, I will show you a place where there will be nobody to forbid your singing."

"You are right, and I thank you, messieurs," cried the old man in a half mad, senile voice. He writhed his arms excitedly, while his eyes sparkled and his lips quivered. "I am young again when I think of it. Come —Madeleine, come, messieurs, come!"

"But father, father——" begged the girl.

"Don't speak, my child; don't say a word," he shouted hoarsely. "You will have two francs, and you will eat and not feel hungry any longer; and I will sing the old song and think myself on the barricades again." He doffed his battered hat, and his white locks streamed in the wind. "Gentlemen," he said with a gleaming smile that made his face shine as that of one inspired or of one mad, "you were never on a barricade. But the day will come, as it came for me; and then—and then—and then——"

His voice dropped and his extended fingers shook warningly amid the silence of the young men.

They had crossed the road to the little street that turned off from the Rue des Martyrs, right opposite the café. A market was held on one side in the daytime, and the little stands were all shut up and quiet

and dark in the sparse light of a single lamp at the corner. On the other side of the street a doorway led into a carter's yard. A smaller door had been cut into the larger one that blocked up the entrance and a woman, the gatekeeper, peered out with curious eyes.

Without waiting to be asked, the old man struck up the first stave the moment the spot in front of the carter's yard was reached and de Langlois said, "Here."

The girl, with frightened eyes, wrung her hands and cried: "Messieurs, messieurs, for Heaven's sake tell him to stop. What shall I do? what shall I do?" Louder and higher and louder and higher rose the old man's voice, as his blood fired with the warlike contagion, and the passers in the Rue des Martyrs close by stopped in wonderment and stole up to the little knot of young men, until quite a crowd was listening.

On a sudden somebody shouted, "The police are coming!" and all the idlers who had been attracted ran as for their lives away into the darkness of the by-streets. The old man sang on heedlessly, his eyes aglow, his face alight with fervor, his chant inspired.

"My God!" cried the girl. "We are lost! We are lost!" and sank on her knees.

"No, you are not lost," answered a manly voice; "take this and be quick."

The girl looked up and saw the fair young man by her side. She felt a purse put into her hand and herself roughly dragged into the carter's yard. The old man was flung more than pushed into the darkness after her, and the door slammed behind him, and when he recovered from his amazement he heard that another voice, loud, and bold, and ringing, had taken up his song where he had left off, and was giving it to the winds.

Then there was a mighty scuffle, and noises and shoutings resounded through the night, and the old man, pulling himself together, and opening the little door shyly and fearfully, saw three burly policemen around the fair young man, who was still singing the "Marseillaise," while his friends were holding other representatives of the law desperately at bay.

The old man crushed his white beard with his shaking fingers. They were taking the fair young man

away, a policeman on either side of him. The old revolutionist's heart quivered, and he was about to rush out into the street and cry: "Stop! I am the offender. Take me, not him, not him!" when, on turning suddenly, he saw in the semi-darkness his daughter lying prone on the ground, limp and unconscious, with the pale, greenish light of the moon lighting up her white face. He stooped and gently raised her head and tried to warm her hands and to restore life by kissing her cold face. The noise without had ceased and all was still.

The girl slowly opened her eyes and threw her thin arms around her father's neck.

"Where is he?" she cried. "What has become of him?"

"Who?" asked the old man. "Whom do you mean?"

"Him who saved us—the hero—the noble heart. Where is he?" she sobbed.

"They are all of them gone, and he is gone with them," he answered.

"Gone! and left nothing behind but this?" she exclaimed; and to the astonished eyes of the old man she showed the purse with its coins of silver and gold. "How shall I hope to find him again with only this? with only this?"

II.

Paris was starving. Paris was dark. Paris, once the light-hearted queen, had donned sackcloth and ashes and lay in chains, in the unbreakable steel fetters forged by a foreign conquerer. All around the city battlements swarmed legions of burly blue-coated warriors; bayonets, cannons, and sabres glittered on every height; nor man nor beast was allowed to pass within or without the beleaguered city's confines. The Empire that was said to be peace had fallen in war, the Emperor was a prisoner, the Empress a fugitive; the proud soldiers of Imperial France, worsted on many a gore-sodden field, had either been led captive beyond the Rhine, or shut in as with a ring of iron and fire, fretting away their brave hearts in fruitless, sultry, bloody skirmishes. The garden of the Tuileries was dark, the Champs Elysées

knew neither song nor singers, neither dance nor dancers. Along the boulevards pale-faced men and hungry-eyed women hurried, while the restaurants were tenantless save for the privileged few whom the proprietors, for old custom's sake, chose to supply with such food as they were able to obtain. Paris was alone, shut off from the world, fallen from her high estate, and the roysterers, the merrymakers, the wasters of good things, the spendthrifts, the gourmets and gourmands, the richest among them even, knew for the first time in their useless lives what hunger really meant—how the tooth of starvation and privation can gnaw, and bite, and pinch, and drag; and they ate rats and mice, and smacked their lips and licked their fingers over cooked morsels of poor wretched dogs and cats that themselves had been starving; they hunted the chattering sparrows as table dainties, and they boiled bones, long flung away, for the nutriment they yet contained. Paris had fallen indeed. Though her sons struggled and fought and died without a murmur to shake off the encompassing chain, the mortal coils were drawn tighter with each day that dawned, with each night that shrouded the sun.

A company of the Francs Tireurs de la Presse and two others of National Guards were standing in marching order in the Avénue de la Grande Armée, just within the inner line of fortifications, ready to file through the gate out toward the Seine, where the pickets of the contending armies sullenly and savagely faced one another. Some of the men were standing under arms, talking, laughing, reckless of the dangers they were about to face for their country's sake; others, seated on the ground, were playing cards and dice, using drums or handkerchiefs as tables. The officers of the Press Company were standing in a group at the door of a wine shop roughly constructed of planks hastily nailed together, where the troops, marching in and out, were able to purchase vilely adulterated wine to refresh them on the march, or a still viler and sulphurous brandy to warm them during the cold nights passed on picket duty. If food was scarce, noxious liquors were abundant in besieged Paris. The captain, a tall broad-chested young fellow of some six or

eight and twenty, with short-cropped fair hair and beard and a big fair mustache, was daintily smoking his cigarette, his gray eyes glittering coldly as he surveyed his rough-and-ready company who were about to be sent on a dangerous mission. He knew that, though as yet he did not know his destination.

One side of the wineshop leaned against an old carpenter's workshop, that had been fitted as a temporary hospital for the wounded who were brought into Paris and who required immediate surgical assistance. Within the wineshop a group of young officers of National Guards, hailing from the Belleville quarter, were singing "The Marseillaise" at the top of their voices, accompanying the song by stampings of feet and beatings of hands; and the boisterous revelry of the men about to supply the Moloch of war with food drowned the moans of the battle god's victims.

A broad gateway led to the hospital entrance, and from thence appeared a tall, handsome girl of some twenty summers, wearing on her arm the badge of mercy—the red cross on white ground. Her slight figure moved with a strange grace, her big black eyes glowed with a soft and mournful lustre, and looking around the place searchingly, her glance fell on the young officer in command of the company of journalists.

She advanced toward him beseechingly.

"Captain," she pleaded, with her big lustrous eyes uplifted in aid of her appeal, "I pray you—I beg of you —get your men to cease. We have two men dying here—two of your poor comrades—two poor soldiers of France."

"My dear, pretty one," replied the captain laughingly, "it is not my men who are disturbing your poor patients. It is these gentlemen here. But I doubt not, they will have nothing to refuse to so charming a lady pleading in so worthy a cause. Is she not handsome, Paul?" he asked, speaking to a dark-haired young lieutenant by his side, while the girl turned to prefer her request to the citizen soldiers from Belleville. "Did you ever see such beautiful eyes?"

"You are right," replied the lieutenant, "she is beautiful. What a charming companion she would make after a cold night's watch."

"You are like the rest of the fellows of the boulevards," replied the captain bitterly. "You cannot imagine a woman being created for any purpose other than to be a man's plaything. A well-turned ankle makes you sigh; a pretty face intoxicates you. You fight duels for them now and then, it is true, but that is only to warn off possible intruders, and to establish some claim upon the fair one's fickle affection. Ah, Paul, you will never understand a good, true woman in your life, and that one, I am sure, is a good and a true one."

The boisterous noises had ceased, the girl's pretty face and witching eyes and manner having tamed even the rowdyism of uncouth Belleville. As she passed the two young officers her eyes lighted on the captain's. She stopped, and an expression of pleasurable doubt colored her pale cheeks. The captain looked at her in his turn, and his glance and hers met in an electric contagion, which neither of them could explain. The girl blushed crimson, with a grateful remembrance.

"Pardon me, captain," she stammered, "were you not——?"

"I remember you now," interrupted Sevrier. "I thought I knew your face. But you have grown so pretty—nay, more, so beautiful, I did not recognize you immediately. Don't you remember her, Paul?" he asked his companion. "Don't you remember the girl and the old man whom you would get to sing 'The Marseillaise,' and we all had to pay for your folly by a month at St. Pélagie?"

"Yes, it is I, messieurs," the girl rejoined, "and I am so pleased to meet you again," she added, addressing Sevrier. "I have never been able to thank you, though I have searched all Paris through. Believe me, captain, I did look for you. You must not think me ungrateful."

"What a strange girl you are," laughed de Langlois, "you seem to have a rooted objection to that poor 'Marseillaise,' this time the same as last, and we are in a republic now, you know, without that old father of yours having been compelled to take his stand behind a barricade. Is he alive still—the man with the grand beard?"

"My father is here with me, monsieur," answered the girl. "He is commissary of the hospital. His former friends remembered him, and he wanted to serve France. He is too old to fight, but he works hard for the poor wounded."

"It is worth while to get one's leg or arm broken to be nursed by so pretty a girl, I suppose," said de Langlois with a sceptic smile. "That's at any rate what my friend Captain Sevrier would urge, though I have my doubts on the subject. But, Gaston, there comes the aide-de-camp with his orders, and I surmise we are off for the Seine and victory or a bad cold and rheumatism. That is the general prosaic result of sleeping on the poetic wet green grass. Good-by, pretty one; or better, au revoir, for we will look you up when we come back."

"You will come back and see me, captain," pleaded the girl. "Now that I have found you again I should not like to lose sight of you after one brief interview."

Sevrier gripped the proffered tiny hand and shook it warmly. "I will come back, my dear," he said, "you may rely on it."

The minute afterward he was on his horse, and the girl watched him with anxious eyes as he rode away at the head of his company.

The rifles were cracking in the distance even at that moment, and the dull boom of the guns vibrated on the air. Out beyond Neuilly a heavy pall of smoke rose skyward, from some building most probably ruthlessly set on fire for the dread purpose and necessities of war.

"Will he come back?" muttered the girl, as she returned to her work of mercy. "Will he come back?"

The hospital was a long, dingy, one-floored building, from which the trade's implements and fittings had been wrenched to make room for the small camp beds that lined the place on either side. A long strip of small-paned windows lighted it underneath its low roof. At either end there were smaller rooms originally used as offices which were reserved for the private use of the surgeons and of the attendants. In this gloomy place men were moaning, groaning, dying, although surrounded by the best care that gentle hands and

kindly hearts could bestow upon them. The girl gave a glimpse at the beds as she passed through, stopping by this man and by that to inquire whether they wanted anything, easing the bandages of this sufferer and saying a cheerful and cheering word to another. At a bed whereon a sorely wounded man lay she was detained. The man was beyond help, but he cried out for this gentle nurse to come and stay by him till the last. He was only a lad, and had been shot through the breast on the previous day, and yet she had already been able to take the place of sister to him. While she was busy with the dying man the musketry began to rattle furiously out beyond the Bois de Boulogne. The girl raised her head and listened anxiously, eagerly.

"He's not there yet," she said to herself; "he can't be there yet."

She had met him but twice in her life, but yet she felt for his danger as if he had been a brother; ay! she who never had a brother felt his danger more, she thought, than if he had been so nearly related.

"He's going there," she said, "where those villainous rifle bullets hiss. He's going to the place where this poor lad met with his death wound."

She nearly forgot herself and waxed a trifle careless in the attention she bestowed upon the man who was passing away toward another world. And then the cannons boomed and roared and thundered, and she even fancied that through the little skylight window high up in the wall she could see the flashes of the guns, which, of course, was mere imaginative fancy. Heavier and heavier, fiercer and fiercer, grew the rattle of the musketry. The cannons crashed through the ceaseless rumble and the roar, and the girl shut her eyes as if in dread to see the horrid sight of the man who had left her, stricken down and lying helpless and unhelped on the rain-soaked field.

"Why can't I be there?" she cried to herself. "Why can't I be with him? Why can't I be near him when he's in danger?"

Her arm infolded the dying man's neck, and the sufferer was barely breathing. His eyes were closing fast, and after lying quite still for a minute or two his head rolled on one side a little and then lay quiet. The girl

had not noticed it. Her mind was away out beyond the bare trees of the Bois de Boulogne; her thoughts endeavored to cleave the ruined forest and to transport themselves on to the field where the cannons flashed and the muskets crashed, where bayonets glittered and men savagely murdered one another. On a sudden, on turning a fearful glance toward the bed, she noticed the boy's face, white and rigid, the glassy eyes turned upward, the lips open, and she withdrew her arm with a cry and rushed into the little room. The old man of the great silvery beard and flowing white locks sat there, with his beard and locks grown whiter than before. The girl rushed past him without noticing him, and in a corner, where a small image of the crucified Redeemer hung on the wall, she threw herself upon her knees, and, raising her hands heavenward, she moaned aloud.

"Grant him to me," she cried in fervent prayer. "Save his life, Thou Holy Redeemer of men! Send him back to me, him to whom I owe so much, and take all else from me, if need be, save my salvation."

"What art thou saying, Madeleine?" asked the old man, turning a long glance toward her. "Whom art thou praying for?"

"For him," she answered excitedly; "for him—the only man who has been kind to thee and me; the only man who relieved our sufferings when we were suffering; the man who went to prison to save thee, and for whom I have been seeking, but whom I could not find until to-day."

"The man of the Rue des Martyrs?" asked the old man. "To save him! and he's gone with the rest, I suppose, out to fight?"

"Yes," she answered.

"And thou art praying that he may return safely?"

"Yes," she gasped again. "I was praying that he may return safely."

"Thou art right, Madeleine," whispered the old man, drawing her toward him.

"'Thou art right to pray. I wish I had prayed more when I was young. Perhaps I would not find it so hard to pray now, when I am old and near the grave. They'll bring him back.'

"Think of it, father," she said. "I found him only again to-day—just now. It would be hard if he were to go like the rest, like those poor men out there."

"You love him then?" he asked.

"More than my life," she replied. "I have loved him from the moment I saw how good, how noble, how kind he was. From the moment he gripped my hand and placed his purse within it and then stood up to take thy place."

She knelt before the little crucifix again in a mute ecstasy of beseeching. Her prayer so filled her soul that after a little she forgot her surroundings, the gray wooden walls and the shelves and the rickety chair were all gone, and she was far away, out beyond the Bois de Boulogne, amid the smoke and the lightnings of battle. And her hero, her idol, lay on the ground with pallid, pain-stricken face, and blood was trickling from a wound in his breast.

"He is wounded. I know it. He is dying, perhaps!" she cried in a torrent of anguish. "I can stay no longer! I must go to him! I must find him!"

She rushed from the room, while the old man looked after her curiously. "She is always so hasty," he said to himself. "She is away again on some mad errand. Madeleine will never change, never!"

The girl flew to the gate at the fortification line. The officers and men on duty there knew her well. "The Francs Tireurs de la Presse," she cried. "Do you know where they are?"

"Out there, of course," retorted the lieutenant whom she addressed, pointing toward the Seine. "And they are hard at work, I'll lay a wager! Can't you hear it rattle? They are having rare fun with those square-headed Prussians. I wish I was there!"

"How can I get there?" the girl asked eagerly.

"Get there?" the officer demanded in wonder. "You? They are under fire, my pretty one, and you might get killed."

"I shall not be killed," she answered with a calm assurance. "Pray, how can I reach them?"

The man looked at her ambulance badge and scratched his head. "I don't know that I ought to allow you to go through," he said, "but if you really

want to go, that red cross on your arm will pass you."

A hospital cart was coming through the gate on its road to the front. The officer stopped the driver. "Take this young lady with you," he said, "and help her to find the Francs Tireurs de la Presse."

But one thought filled Madeleine's bosom as she rattled along the rough, ill-paved, uneven road. "Shall I be in time? Shall I be in time?" Then a warm certainty wrapped itself around her heart like the comforting glow of a hearth fire on a bleak winter night. "Yes, I shall be in time. I know I shall."

Away they went, through the shattered streets first of all, and then through the wood, where the trees had been cut to the ground to allow free range to the artillery fire, and on, onward. Her eyes were closed to all but her mission, and she knew not whither she was going, nor cared.

The guns were crashing less furiously when the driver roused her from her reverie and summoned her to descend. "The Francs Tireurs de la Presse are out there, mademoiselle," he said, "out there somewhere. You will have to search for them yourself. But go straight for that little house where you see the smoke rising. I must not go further."

The bullets were even then singing about their ears. The girl, as thoughtless of the death that whistled around her as if she had been clad in steel, walked on across the miry broken ground, into which she sank deeper with every step she took. Fiercer and more vicious became the whizzing, but Madeleine neither paused nor looked. Onward, toward the spot where she would find him who had been kind to her and to her old father.

Wounded men passed her and looked at her strangely. An officer on horseback reined in his horse and asked her where she was going.

"I am going to the Francs Tireurs de la Presse," she answered calmly, with her big eyes aglow.

"Bravo! my brave little one," answered the officer. "You may be of service there. They have been cut up badly. You will find them at the other side of that house," and he dashed away again.

She reached the little building, and just beyond it, at the edge of a low eminence, she espied a line of men lying on the ground, while little puffs of smoke rose from among them.

"What on earth brings you here?" cried de Langlois when he saw her coming toward him, straight and erect. "Lie down, or you will be killed. Get to cover immediately."

She heeded not his advice. Her eyes wandered along the line, but the man for whom she had come was not there.

"Where is your captain?" she asked.

"Poor Gaston?" answered the lieutenant; "he is out there." He pointed to a plantation of willows about fifty yards in front. "His horse bolted with him and he went down in the rain of bullets."

"He is out there!" she cried. "Your captain out there? You leave him out there, and you call yourselves men, brave men?"

"Don't speak like that," answered the lieutenant sadly. "No man can do the impossible. Nothing can live down there. We tried three times to bring him in and lost twenty-seven men, and we never got further than ten yards from here."

"And is he to lie out there," she demanded, "without help—dying perhaps?"

"It is the fortune of war," he replied, shrugging his shoulders. "We shall have to wait until it gets darker, and then we will make a rush for it."

"Wait until it gets darker!" she exclaimed bitterly. "He may be dead then. You will not go to him. Very well, I will."

She stepped across the brow of the little hill with her face ablaze with a holy purpose. Her big eyes gleamed, and to the men around she looked like a goddess of old. The bullets tore the air in an incessant hail, but she seemed invulnerable.

Slowly, like a martyr or a saint of old, heedless of the death that rushed at her and flashed about her, she walked on. Then on a sudden her voice rose in an inspired melody, clear as a bell and soul-stirring as a clarion—

"Allons, enfants de la patrie,
Le jour de gloire est arrivé;
Contre nous de la tyrannie
L'étendard sanglant est levé. . . ."

Not a man among them all ever knew how it came about, or what possessed them, but in a moment, in a heart-beat's space, they were all on their feet, racing through the iron hail that stormed over the place which separated them from their leader. She was the first to reach him, and she raised his head while six strong arms encircled him, and they flew back with him to their post of safety. They were still singing "Marchons, marchons; qu'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons," when they laid him down on the ground, and Madeleine, tearing open his uniform coat, stanched the slowly-trickling flow of blood on his chest with her handkerchief. After a little while he opened his eyes and smiled at her, and she knelt and raised her hands to heaven.

"Thanks to Thee, Son of God!" she cried in a half-mad fervor. "Thou hast heard my prayer, and he lives, he lives!"

Then she turned pale, and her body swayed to and fro, and she sank slowly across Sevrier, and de Langlois, rushing to her aid, saw that she herself was wounded.

III.

Paris was smiling, Paris was calm. Paris, the battle-worn queen, was recovering from the wounds inflicted upon her by the merciless foreigner and by her still more ruthless, mad, matricidal sons. The purple was gone; the glittering diadem lay shattered; the golden bees were scattered in the dust; the lace, the costly silks, were torn and trodden into the mire; but she had assumed the becoming garb of a comely housewife and was happy. The hammers rang merrily upon the anvils; the workshops were astir with honest labor; the gardens, ablaze with the bloom of summer, rang again with children's laughter, and Paris was at work honestly to redeem the past and to prepare for a brighter future.

On a bright, sunny afternoon Madeleine and her father were sitting in the gardens of the Tuileries, the

old man drawing grotesque figures with his stick in the sand, and the girl looking vacantly at the blue sky overhead. Every minute or so she consulted her pretty little gold watch. "Only three minutes more," she whispered to herself; and then it came to be "only two minutes more," and then "only one minute more." Madeleine with beaming eyes saw Sevrier come down the steps from the Rue Castiglione, and without knowing what she was doing she began to hum "The Marseillaise."

The young man came toward her with manly love and happiness wreathing his handsome features. "I have settled it all, my darling," he said, as she rose to greet him. "To-morrow, at eleven, at the Mairie."

"We shall be so happy, shall we not, my dearest?" she answered, and again the melody of "The Marseillaise" tripped softly on her tongue.

"Ah," he said with a smile, "'The Marseillaise.' It brought us together. A good omen, my darling, a good omen."

Like Jacob of old this man waited seven years for his happiness, and then—but read this story of his wooing. It is from the French of Eugène Chavette, and was translated for the *Epoch* by Isabel Smithson.

THE LADY-CASHIER.

YES, sir, you may, by inspecting the time-sheet in my office, see that for twenty years I have never been one minute late, and yet I say and believe that punctuality is an execrable vice. Who does not despise the man who always arrives exactly on time, appearing just when one is trying to finish some occupation, and watch in hand, saying blandly, "Am I not punctual?" Yes, sir, after serving as a regulator for all the clocks in my neighborhood for twenty years, I repeat, punctuality is execrable. I am cured of it, for it was the cause of the greatest disappointment of my life. Listen, and judge for yourself.

For seven long years I had breakfasted at the same restaurant; every morning at exactly five minutes past eleven I opened the door, and at precisely five minutes before noon I closed it.

It is useless to describe the lady-cashier; suffice it to say that from the instant I tasted my first cup of coffee in that restaurant, she reigned in my heart.

Did my glances express my feelings? I cannot say, but I know that for seven years we loved in silence. It took just that length of time for me to get near enough to speak to her, as I had to work my way from table No. 7, which I first occupied, up to table No. 1, which stood next to the cashier's desk. I was too punctual to arrive an instant earlier at the restaurant than the six other guests, and as they were as exact as I, I was obliged to employ strategy to dislodge them.

The first man, at table No. 6, was easily disposed of. While waiting to be served I amused myself in cutting corks, and the sound set his teeth on edge and annoyed him so much that he went into the next room, and I took his place

Six months after, chance came to my aid and relieved

me of No. 5. A waiter broke a goblet and spilt coffee on the table, and the occupant being superstitious insisted on changing his seat, so I moved up again.

In the course of the next two meals I succeeded in making myself obnoxious to No. 4, who had a habit of taking a little nap immediately after his breakfast. I contrived, by tilting my chair, to knock his repeatedly, so that at last he got up and left in a fury.

No. 3 held out only one day against me. I made bread and butter black with caviare and soaked it in my coffee, and the sight of the mess made my neighbor so sick that he fled precipitately and hardly had time to get out of the room.

Then I sat next to No. 2. Ah, I shall never forget that man! It took me four years to get rid of him, and but for the encouraging glances of my angel I should have given up in despair. Perhaps you wonder why I did not come to breakfast two hours earlier, when I would have had my choice of tables. That would have been a simple matter to most men, but I was a victim to the folly of punctuality.

To return to No. 2. I tried cork-cutting, putting caviare in my coffee, and dancing about on my chair, but it was all in vain. Then I discovered that the man was stone deaf, besides being blind in one eye. I decided, therefore, to attack him through his pocket, and accordingly I made a practice of surreptitiously putting cups, glasses and decanters close to his elbow, on the blind side, and he invariably knocked them down, and had to pay damages. Every day there was a heap of broken glass and china on the floor between us, and every day he paid the cost uncomplainingly. The restaurant-keeper profited largely by these accidents, for he had the afflicted guest served with cracked and broken ware, and charged him the price of new on its being demolished. At the end of four years No. 2 had destroyed as much table ware as would suffice to set up in housekeeping all the savages of Oceanica, those people who have so few luxuries that one pair of gloves is sufficient to make clothes for ten men. Poor No. 2! I pity him now, for I have learned that the reason he clung to his post so pertinaciously was that he too adored the lady cashier. I had no mercy on him, how-

ever, and being at the end of my resources, had resolved to put the police on his track, when he was one day knocked down and killed by one of those butchers' wagons which are allowed, I know not why, to rush through Paris streets at full speed. The next morning I seated myself at table No. 2 where, although not quite within the Promised Land, I enjoyed its delicious fragrance. I breathed the odor of the orange-flower water which she poured into hideous little onion-shaped bottles.

Only one obstacle now separated me from her, my beloved. It was No. 1. I determined to crush him, and from that day war was declared between us. He was a terrible man, formerly a captain of gendarmes, strong as a Turk, with heavy beard and mustache. There was a certain amount of gallantry and sentiment, however, under his rough exterior, for he used to fix his great eyes upon the lady cashier, and repeat, hour after hour these words: "I am like the ivy; I die where I attach myself."

The prospect did not console me in the least, for he looked as if he would live to be a hundred. I tried to win the monster by relating amusing tales and making puns, but he suddenly dampened my ardor by saying, as he twisted his mustache fiercely,

"Are you not aware, sir, that it was owing to his wasting time in making puns that Grouchy arrived too late at Waterloo?"

This piece of historical information astonished me not a little, and I felt that if France could mislay her Code for twenty-four hours I would joyfully stab the terrible captain—in the back. At last Heaven took pity on me and my love and sent an epidemic sickness which carried off my rival.

Immediately I installed myself at table No. 1. I was next to her! I contemplated her charming figure above the desk, her blonde hair, her rosebud mouth! Seven years had indeed made some alterations in her charms, but I saw her only with the eyes of—that first cup of coffee. I cannot describe our mutual emotions at that moment so long waited for; joy nearly suffocated us and turned our brains; I dipped my napkin into the decanter and poured coffee into my pocket-book,

while she piled up *sous* on plates and dropped lumps of sugar into the money-drawer. Only a few words were needed to bind us to each other, and no one else in the room suspected anything, when, affecting to be reading the hatter's name inside my hat, I murmured from the depths of the lining:

"I love thee."

She, while apparently busy in drying a punch-bowl, replied;

"I love thee."

"Be my wife!" I added, "to-morrow, at my notary's, at thirty-five minutes past nine."

That was the exact hour at which I always went to my chiropodist, but love prompted the sacrifice.

The next morning, at the minute agreed on, I was with my notary, and while he prepared the papers I tried to describe my beloved.

"You will see her!" I cried in an ecstasy, "she is blonde, slender, beautiful—she has the hand of a queen and the throat of a goddess! For seven long years I have loved her."

Suddenly the notary asked in a careless tone,

"Is she short or tall?"

This simple question overwhelmed me, and I could only answer;

"I do not know."

"What!" he exclaimed, "you have loved her for seven years and you do not know whether she is short or tall?"

"It is the solemn truth. I have never seen her except in the restaurant; I am so exact and punctual that I have never been able to devote any time to her except my breakfast hour, that is, from five minutes past eleven, to five minutes before noon, and all that time she is seated behind a desk, so that I have never seen lower than her waist."

As I finished speaking, the door opened and my bride appeared. With a cry of dismay I fell unconscious. The beloved of my heart, the angel of my dreams, was the possessor of two wooden legs!

We all enjoy reminiscences, and when the reminiscences are those of a French army officer who is opposed to duelling—and yet who has killed his man—and in whose life is a buried romance, our pleasure in reading them is all the keener. It is to Arch Jennings, and the San Francisco *Chronicle* that we owe the following narrative.

THE FENCING MASTER.

"LUNGE, keep your left shoulder low. Bend more with the knees. That is better. Now coupe disengage. Double. Redouble."

I thought my fencing teacher was unusually severe. The clock marked twenty minutes since we commenced. My fingers ached from too tightly gripping the handle of the foil, a fault common to beginners, and my left shoulder felt as though it would drop off if I did not lower that arm.

"Advance, retreat. Open your chest more. Lunge, again.

"Straighten the left leg in lunging. Prepare to do the salute. We will rest a moment."

I took off my mask, and throwing a coat across my shoulders gladly availed myself of a seat, while M. Gallois leaned against the window frame and watched the people as they hurried along the slippery streets under their dripping umbrellas.

I had always been interested in my fencing teacher. There was an air of reserve and a suggestion of mystery about him which excited my curiosity. Tall, lithe, with a well-shaped head and a kindly face, he was altogether a handsome man.

He lived in a modest, neat little home, which was cared for by his sister, a gentle little woman and almost an invalid. She worshipped her brother, while in return he watched over her with tender regard.

I was the only pupil who had braved the storm, and, taking advantage of the opportunity to question him, I asked concerning the broadsword and the advantages one who was skilled in its use would have when pitted against an opponent more familiar with the foil but not

so adept with the sabre. "When you can handle your foil," he replied, "in twelve lessons I can make you skilful with the broadsword. I do not like to teach it, though," he added after a pause, and with a sigh he turned from the window and paced thoughtfully up and down the floor.

Arranged in racks around the room were the foils and rapiers used in fencing. In a corner by themselves, locked into their case, was a pair of highly-polished, keen-pointed duelling rapiers—a reminder of the serious turn possible to our sport. Upon the chimney breast were a number of old swords, shields, spears and other implements of ancient warfare ornamentally arranged; and on the mantel was an antique clock surmounted by a miniature man in armor.

At the further end of the room was a rack containing the broadswords—the wooden ones used in beaching and the steel blades used in "play." Hanging below them were the masks for the protection of the head and neck. Padded on top and at the sides, they always reminded me of the head covering of a diver.

M. Gallois paused in his walk before this rack. After looking at it for some time he shook his head sadly and continued his pace up and down the room. Soon he resumed his place at the window and, as one is apt to do when one has been thinking, began talking as though he had just paused in a narrative.

"Perhaps you have wondered at my accent, or, rather, at the lack of it. My mother was an Englishwoman, the daughter of a college professor. My father, who was in the diplomatic service of the French Government, first met her in London. It was a case of love at first sight and they were married. My sister and myself were the only children, and now that our parents are dead we are the last of our family.

"I entered the army, and became a lieutenant. To be a soldier had always been my ambition, and at the age of twenty-eight I found myself in good standing with my superiors, well liked by my fellows, and in a fair way to future promotion.

"In the latter part of 188– we were quartered in barracks near G——, a little town not very far from Paris. There were many country seats round about, and the

officers were generally invited to be present at the different entertainments.

"Together with a number of my brother officers I attended a ball given by the Countess de Mauvin in honor of her daughter. It was quite a grand affair. Though nearly winter, the rooms of the fine, spacious old house had been converted into a fairyland of flowers, and the decorations were as beautiful as taste, coupled with means, could make them.

"I met many friends among the guests, among whom was Miss A——, the daughter of the American Consul at M——. During her first year in France I had met her frequently, and as at that time she did not speak French very well, it was a relief for her to meet one with whom she could talk in her own tongue. In this way we had become well acquainted and good friends.

"After our waltz, in which she danced as only your American girls can, we found a corner and chatted gayly of old times. She talked well, so I was content to listen and to watch the effect from the red shade of a lamp near by which cast warm shadows around the dimples of her bright face. We were interrupted by the approach of a tall, broad-shouldered man, in the dress uniform of a captain of cavalry, who came to address Miss A——. He was a handsome fellow, with dark eyes and hair and fine white teeth. I knew him slightly. He was noted among the officers as much for his savage temper as he was among women for his fascinating manners. I had heard it gossiped at our mess that he had been very attentive to Miss A——, but that her father, on being informed of his many debts, and particularly as to his dissolute habits, had first, with admirable fairness, confirmed the information and then related the facts to his daughter.

"Bowing distantly to me he turned to Miss A—— and addressed her with the engaging, captivating air he knew so well how to use with women. She replied to him with cold politeness, and, deliberately turning to me, resumed the conversation which his coming had interrupted.

"He stood for a moment undecided, then, turning abruptly, walked quickly away, with his head thrown back and his hands angrily clenched at his sides. I

watched him until he disappeared among the many couples who were promenading after the waltz in the distant ball-room.

"'I hope,' said Miss A—— following my glance, 'I have not been rude to one of your friends?'

"'Captain Charonot,' I answered, 'is a man whom I cannot bring myself to like. Not being able to in any way respect him, I cannot even admire him.'

"'I am glad to hear you say that,' she replied. 'My father gave me very good reasons for wishing me not to speak with him.'

"Mutually changing the subject, our talk continued pleasantly for some time until, discovering her, a friend claimed a promised dance, and escorted her to the ball-room, leaving me musing over the witty things she had said and wondering if all American girls were like her.

"I did not see Miss A—— again until after I had made my adieus to the hostess. She was standing near the doorway, as though watching for some one. Catching my eye she beckoned to me with her fan.

"'Oh, Mr. Gallois!' she exclaimed, 'I will have to ask a favor of you. You know I came with Mme. Le Roy. She left early, as she has not been very well, with the understanding that the Flamants were to take me to her home on their way to their own. They have gone!'

"She looked so dejected I could not help smiling, especially at the droll way in which she finished. I assured her I would be only too glad to see her safely to the home of her friends.

"She hesitated a moment, evidently thinking about proper chaperonage, but as every one of our acquaintance had gone, we were obliged to make the best of the situation.

"'I am very grateful to you for your kindness,' she said, 'but won't you please tell the driver to hurry.'

"We were quickly in a carriage, the door closed with a bang, and with the horses at a lively trot we were soon passing through the little village of G——, the small town two miles from which were our barracks. The industrious inhabitants of this now silent little place had long since retired, and we rattled noisily through its deserted streets. The moon shone through

the carriage windows and so lighted the head of Miss A—— that I fancied I could see her dimples peeping from the fur wrap which encircled her throat and partly hid her face.

"My thoughts were suddenly and rudely interrupted. There was a crash, we were sharply tilted to one side and my companion was pitched violently toward me.

"Looking out I found to my dismay that we had broken down near the Café Royale, a wayside resort of questionable repute. A number of men were standing about the doorway smoking, while by the singing and laughter I knew that others were inside carousing.

"With the help of the driver we extricated ourselves after some little difficulty, and found that one of the wheels had broken short off at the axle. The shadow of a tree had masked a rut hole, and, considering our rapid pace, it was a wonder that one or both of us had not been seriously hurt. It was not necessary for me to calm Miss A——. Though keenly realizing the embarrassment of our predicament she simply looked at me with a pale, appealing face, which mutely inquired what was to be done.

"I requested her to stay in the shadow by the carriage while I looked about for another conveyance. Quickly entering the café I searched for some one from whom I could borrow, for the sheds in the yard contained a number of rigs. I saw no one whom I felt I could approach. Vainly passing from one room to another I was almost in despair when I heard the welcome sound of a familiar laugh. Quickly locating it, I entered one of the cardrooms. Lieutenant Labadie, a young fellow of about my own age and an officer in the same regiment, was seated at a table throwing dice. It did not need the glasses and bottles beside him to show that, with the others, he had been drinking.

"Catching his eye, I beckoned to him. With a wave of his hand and a shout he noisily welcomed me, and, grabbing my arm, forced me into a chair, introduced me to his companions and insisted that I join them in their sport. With much difficulty I got him to accompany me aside. I asked him if he had a carriage waiting for him. He nodded assent. Without giving any reason I asked him for it,

"'Can't do it,' he answered. 'Long way from quarters. Big dinner. Lots of wine, you know. Couldn't walk straight if I tried—don't want to try.'

"'Labadie,' I said, 'you must do me this favor.'

"'Can't do it, can't do it,' he repeated, preparing to leave me. Turning about he winked slyly and added, 'If I was alone I might.'

"The thought of Miss A—— anxiously waiting on the road, with only the strange driver for a companion, moved me to desperation. Catching him savagely by the shoulder I half implored, half demanded, 'I must have a conveyance, Labadie. A woman's good name depends upon it.'

"He looked at me for a moment, then, for the first time speaking like himself, he replied: 'Why didn't you say that at first? You will find it in the second shed. If the driver isn't drunk, like the rest of us, tell him I sent you for it.'

"'If he is?' I asked.

"'Kick him and take it anyhow,' and, laughing carelessly, he went back to his companions.

"I found Miss A—— where I had left her, greatly alarmed at what must have seemed a long absence. In the moonlight her face looked as white as the wraps she wore.

"'Oh! Mr. Gallois,' she exclaimed, 'it seemed as if you would never return. Can't you get me home?'

"Telling her of my success, I sent the driver for Labadie's carriage. On account of the breakdown and the narrow road it could not come to the place where we stood, so we were compelled to go near the café and use the stepping block at its entrance. As we reached the carriage door a party of men and their companions came out of a side entrance. Among them I recognized the tall form of Captain Charonot. I hastily put Miss A—— into the carriage, trying to screen her as I did so and we were rapidly driven away.

"Two weeks after the ball of the Countess de Mauvin I met Captain Charonot at our officers' mess, to which he had been invited by one of our set. He was really an entertaining fellow who had travelled considerably and seen much of the world. There was a certain dash about what he did and said, and it was

not long before the entire table was listening to his stories. He was particularly quick at repartee, which is always amusing—to those who are not the victims of another's wit—and he seemed specially bent upon making a butt of me. I replied to his thrusts good-naturedly, however. Not liking the man, it was only too easy a matter to have gotten into a quarrel with him.

"Changing the subject upon which we had been talking, he began to speak of duelling. Now duels among the officers of the French army, and even among the civilians, are much more common than you would suppose. In Paris, should you beat a man with your fists, you would find yourself in jail, with small prospect of getting out; but in a hostile meeting with duelling rapiers you can mortally wound your opponent and have but little fear of the authorities beyond a fine and perhaps a few days' detention. In most of the duels which take place the principals are satisfied with the drawing of blood from slight flesh wounds. Yet not infrequently they end more seriously. Only a few days before this dinner one of my friends had been killed, and it was about this that Captain Charonot was talking.

"'M. Verdier did right to give the challenge. What do you think of it, M. Gallois?' he asked, turning suddenly to me with a cynical smile.

"My antipathy to duelling was well known. I always avoided quarrels which might lead to them. Perhaps my acknowledged skill with the foil and rapier helped me, for I never had been mixed up in any of these so-called affairs of honor.

"'The affair you speak of,' I replied, 'was little more than a cold-blooded assassination. M. deLauney, who was much the older man and a skilful swordsman, deliberately picked a quarrel with M. Verdier, who was almost a novice in the art of fencing.'

"'But,' declared the captain, with his eyes fixed steadily on me, 'you would not have your friend declared a coward? What else could he have done? He had been insulted.'

"'Yes,' I replied warmly, 'his kind friends would not allow him to forget that. All of you gentlemen know the result. He is dead, and his gray-haired mother

who worshipped him is now in her bed, prostrated and heart-broken over the murder of her only son.'

"There were murmurs of approval around the table, for young Verdier had been a favorite.

"Still speaking slowly and distinctly, and with a slight sneer, he asked:

"'Then you, M. Gallois, would not fight a duel?'

"'Not under any circumstances,' I replied.

"'There are times when one can be forced into a duel,' he returned.

"We were the only ones speaking. The others were listening in that uneasy fashion which people cannot help assuming when something unpleasant is expected. One or two attempted to put the conversation into pleasanter channels by chatting individually with those opposite. As for myself, I saw that Captain Charonot was deliberately picking a quarrel with me. His manner had been particularly irritating and it was with difficulty that I restrained myself. I did not answer his last question, so he continued:

"'Now, gentlemen, even M. Gallois here, with all his assumed dislike of such affairs, and, of course, we all know it is dislike and not fear of results'—this was said with studied emphasis—'would, under pressure, resent an affront, but the cause would have to be great. I do not think, however, so small a thing as a lady's good name would arouse him. He would not object to having it known, for instance, that at three o'clock in the morning, about two weeks ago, he was seen coming out of the Café Royal with the charming Miss ——'

"The name did not pass his lips, for with a savage bound I cleared the space between us, and as he rose to meet me, struck him full in the mouth with my clenched fist. He fell with a crash.

"I was quickly seized and held. Others helped him to his feet. The blood was trickling from his bruised mouth, and as he attempted to smile I noted with brutal satisfaction that some of his white teeth, which he had always used to such advantage when he laughed, had disappeared.

* * * * * *

"Within an hour, as I sat in my room with two of my oldest friends talking over the affair and its inevita-

ble consequences, some officers called and sent in their cards. Divining what their visit meant, I asked my companions if they would act for me. They readily consented. Being the challenged party I had the choice of weapons. I told them to name sabres. As for the details and the time and place of meeting, to comply with every whim of my opponent or the requests of his representatives. They looked at me in surprise. Seeing me firm, however, they left the room to meet my callers.

"Upon their return they asked me the reason for my selection of weapons. Replying, I said: 'Gentlemen, with the duelling rapier I fear no swordsman in France. Captain Charonot would be as a child before me. He is skilful with the broadsword, much more so than I am. I have used it but little. It is a clumsy weapon—a club. It is not intended for gentlemen. At the table he insinuated I lacked courage. It was his intention to make me challenge him, when he would have chosen his weapon, the sabre. He is taller and far stronger than I am. The sabre gives him the advantage, but I will show him I am not the coward. He may kill me, but he can neither forget nor efface the blow I gave him.'

"After my friends had gone, my anger and excitement somewhat subsided, and I began to realize my position. Going to my desk to secure some writing materials the first thing to catch my eye was the portrait of my mother. Knowing my savage temper when aroused, and my early fondness for pistol and sword practice, she had made me promise never to fight a duel. So far I had succeeded in avoiding all quarrels. Now I was not only about to break my word, but perhaps to leave my sister alone in the world without a protector. At that moment I would have given worlds to have been able to recall what had happened. But the thought of the determined and malignant effort of my enemy to anger me, his insinuating, sneering manner, and his cowardly, unmanly, lying threat came vividly back, sweeping away all thoughts of home and of the future.

"I tried to imagine the real motive of the quarrel. What object had he in irritating me? We had met

but seldom—were scarcely acquainted. There recurred to me the incident at the ball of the Countess de Mauvin. Was it because he had never before been snubbed by a woman that he wished to deprive of life the man who had witnessed his chagrin, or did he wrongly suppose I had been the means of his humiliation?"

"After putting my papers in order and writing a few letters I went to bed. The victim of conflicting emotions, I wearily passed the night.

"Early next morning, accompanied by my two friends, I walked to the place of meeting—a pretty spot of grass on the edge of a grove of trees. Being the first to arrive, there was opportunity to look about. The sun was just rising over the distant hills and it gradually flooded with light the valley below, driving before it the gathered mists of the night. Compared with this panorama of brightness, this promise of a cheerful day, the hills beyond loomed dark and sombre in contrast, grimly suggesting the difference between life and death.

"The golden cross on the church of the distant village caught the virgin rays of the sun and shone with glowing splendor. Sounding softly and sweetly in the distance, a bell began tolling for the early mass.

"The arrival of Captain Charonot and his friends, accompanied by a surgeon, carrying under his arm a professional-looking case, brought me back to the terrible reality of the occasion.

"The seconds got together and arranged preliminaries, conversing the while in ominously low voices. Upon the convenient stump of a tree the surgeon methodically arranged his instruments and bandages.

"The captain stood apart, his broad-shouldered figure towering above the others. When not indifferently watching the surgeon or the group of seconds he glared at me malevolently.

"The seconds having agreed as to the details, we stripped to the waist, that our arms might have greater freedom, and then took positions facing each other. Upon the toss of a coin for position I lost and Charonot so selected that I was forced to face the sun. One of the seconds crossed the points of the extended sabres

and so held them. Turning to first one and then the other, he asked:

"'Are you ready, monsieur?'

Each of us in turn assented. 'Allez!' he cries, and, releasing his hold, sprang aside.

"There was a sweeping salute made rather from force of habit than a desire to be polite, and the blades crossed with a clash. My opponent immediately feinted to draw me on, but I did not respond. Two more feints for cuts below the waist, intended to make me lower my guard, followed each other quickly. Then came a wicked cut intended for my neck. I parried with a return cut at his arm, and after that the blades clicked so rapidly even an expert could hardly have followed them. It was cut and thrust, feint and parry, each seeking an advantage.

"I began to see why my friends had tried to dissuade me in my choice of weapons, for my opponent was not only a man of great physical strength, but remarkably quick as well, an unusual combination.

"My wrist and forearm soon began to feel the unusual strain of the heavy blade. Divining this, my adversary forced me. Overreaching himself in one of his savage slashes, he became unguarded. I lunged slightly and with a quick thrust lightly touched him on the breast, cutting the flesh. Recovering himself and mistaking my magnanimity, he said, with a sneer:

"'Monsieur lacked the courage to make a long thrust.'

"With the remark, 'It is nothing,' he waved aside the surgeon, who had come forward at the sight of the blood which trickled down his bare chest.

"As though himself weary, he contented himself with feinting and weak cuts. Hoping to catch me unawares, he suddenly changed his tactics and attacked me furiously. Perceiving an opening he made a sweeping head cut. Had it reached me it would have split my skull. There was only one way to avoid it—I gave him the stop thrust. My blade entered under his armpit. He fell at my feet without so much as a word, and there was no need of the services of those who quickly bent over his motionless form."

I waited for M. Gallois to conclude his narrative, but he stood silently leaning against the casement in

the position he assumed when he commenced his story. His eyes were fixed on the leaden sky with the wide-open expression of one whose thoughts are far away. The antique clock, with its miniature warrior grimly standing guard, ticked loudly in the still room. The rain dripped, dripped from the leaves outside.

"And the lady, monsieur?" I suggested.

Apparently he did not hear me, but turning from the window he said, with a mixture of austerity and suggestion:

"You will take another lesson to-morrow?"

Gracefully holding his foil in his right hand, with his left he pulled aside the curtains from the doorway, and, so standing, he gravely bowed me from the room.

Some men would rather be famous even as fools than not to be famous at all. And so we have our bridge-jumpers, and quail eaters, and forty day fasters. But in the dreamy orient, the "bad eminence" to which ambitious souls would climb, is of a slightly different character. Whether or not the Eastern ambition is nobler than the Western, you can perhaps decide aft r you have read this Moorish story, which was translated for ROMANCE by Eva Rendle from the French of Alphonse Daudet.

THE IDLER AND THE FIG.

IN the lazy little village of Blidah some years before the French invasion, there lived an honest Moor, named after his father, Sidi Lakdar, but to whom the villagers had given the name of *The Idler*. The Moors are known to be the most indolent people in the world, but those of the village of Blidah were considered the laziest of their countrymen. It was perhaps to be attributed to the languorous perfumes of oranges and limes which hung over the town like a sweet scented cloud.

But among all who lived in this laziest of lazy towns no one could come up to Sidi Lakdar for downright idleness and nonchalance. The worthy man had elevated his vice to the height of a profession; other people might be embroiderers, café owners, spice merchants and so on—but *he* was an *Idler*.

When his father died he inherited a small garden under the ramparts of the town, surrounded by low white walls falling into decay. The gate was so entangled by weeds that it could not be closed. There were a few fig and banana trees. Here and there in the grass a spring bubbled up.

It was in his garden that Sidi Lakdar passed his life, prone on his back in the grass, silent and motionless, while the little red ants found a home in his beard. When he was hungry he stretched out an arm and gathered a fig or a banana lying within reach; but he would have preferred starvation to the alternative of rising to gather the fruit off the tree. So most of the figs decayed where thev fell and the trees suffered from the general neglect.

This extraordinary indolence made Lakdar quite a noted person in that part of the country; he was looked up to and reverenced as a sort of saint. When the ladies of the town visited the cemetery near by, they walked their mules as they passed his domicile and spoke in whispers under their white veils; while men inclined their heads in involuntary homage.

Every day after school hours a crowd of boys in gaily striped silk vests and red caps congregated on one of the walls inclosing Lakdar's domain, and tried in all sorts of ways to disturb that magnificent indolence; calling him by name, laughing, shouting, throwing orange peel at him and otherwise tormenting him.

But in vain! The Idler did not move. Every now and then a voice from the depths of the grass would be heard: "Take care now, take care, if I only get up to you!" But he never got up.

It happened that one of these boys coming constantly with the others to make game of the Idler, found himself at last overcome by admiration, and a great desire to assume himself the horizontal existence. He went to his father and boldly declared that he intended giving up school and wished to become an Idler.

"An Idler! You!" said the father, a worthy turner of pipe stems, as busy as a bee, and seated before his lathe every morning at cockcrow. "You, an Idler! a pretty idea indeed!"

"Yes, father, I wish to be an Idler like Sidi Lakdar."

"Nothing of the sort, my boy, you shall be a turner like your father or a register at the law courts of the Cadi, like your Uncle Ali, but you shall never become an Idler—never. Be off now to school, or I may be tempted to use this fine new piece of cherry wood on your back. Be off now, you young rascal!"

The cherry wood had the desired effect, and the boy feigning obedience, withdrew; but instead of going to school he made his way to a Moorish bazaar, and seizing his opportunity secreted himself between two piles of Smyrna rugs and remained there all day, lying on his back staring up at the Moorish lanterns and richly embroidered bodices glistening in the sun, while he inhaled the delicious perfume from the flasks of attar

of roses scattered about. In this manner he passed all the time that he should have been at school.

His father soon got an inkling of how matters stood; but in vain he shouted, stormed, cursed the name of Allah and punished the young urchin with all the cherry wood canes in his shop. All was useless; the boy only repeated obstinately, "I will be an Idler," and he was found continually stretched out in some corner. Utterly discouraged at last, the father took a decided step after consulting the Registrar Ali.

"Listen to me," he said to his son, "as you are determined to be an Idler, I will take you to Lakdar; he will examine you and if you have any real fitness for his profession, I will beg him to take you as an apprentice."

"That will suit me," replied the boy.

The very next day, with freshly shaven heads, and lavishly perfumed with verbena, they sought the Idler in his little garden. The gate was always open, so they entered without ceremony, but the grass being very high and very thick they had some trouble to locate the lord of the domain. At last they found him lying under the fig trees in a maze of birds and overgrown plants—a bundle of yellow rags. He received them with a grunt.

"Allah be with you, Sidi Lakdar," said the father, bowing low, his hand on his heart. "This is my son, who insists on becoming an Idler. I have brought him to you for examination that you may decide if he really has any fitness for your profession; in which case I beg of you to allow him to become your apprentice, and I will pay all that is necessary."

Sidi Lakdar silently motioned to them to sit down. The father seated himself, and the boy stretched himself at full length on the grass; a good sign to begin with. Then they silently gazed at one another. It was high noon; the warm, mellow light flooded the little garden and seemed to make everything in it drowsy. The only sounds to be heard were the bubbling of the springs under the grass, the wild broom bursting its pods in the sunshine, and the sleepy birds fluttering idly from one twig to another with a sound like the opening and shutting of a fan. Every now

and then a ripe fig fell from branch to branch till it reached the ground. Then Sidi Lakdar would stretch out his arm and carry the fruit wearily to his mouth. The boy took no such trouble; the finest figs fell close to him and he never even turned his head. The master from the corner of his eye watched him but said nothing.

One hour, two hours passed. The time dragged heavily for the poor turner; however, he dared not say anything, but remained motionless with his legs crossed, succumbing a little himself, occasionally, to the effects of the perfumed, drowsy atmosphere which enveloped them.

Suddenly a large fig fell from a tree plump on the cheek of the boy. A beautiful fig, by Allah! rose-colored, sweet, and scented like honey. The boy only had to touch it with one finger to roll it into his mouth; but even that proved too much exertion, so he lay without stirring while the fruit rested on his cheek. At last the temptation mastered him; he glanced at his father and said drowsily, "Father, please put it in my mouth."

Sidi Lakdar had a fig in his hand; throwing it far from him and turning to the father, he cried angrily, "And this is the boy that you brought to be my apprentice! I tell you he is my master; it is he who should teach me!" and falling on his knees before the boy he bowed his head to the ground and cried:

"Hail, Father of Idleness!"

He disregarded the rule which bids men to keep to the right; hence his very strange experience, which is graphically described by W. C. Morrow in the San Francisco *Argonaut*.

THE WRONG DOOR.

My condition, at last, became alarming, and I was afraid of myself. The cause of it—ah, that was something! Had it been a matter which an honorable man might discuss with a friend, I could have had the healing consolation of sympathy; but at the very core of my affliction lay the obligation of silence. Let us suppose a case:

Once there was a very beautiful woman, married happily, and a mother. Her husband had a friend, a man of the world. This man discovered in his friend's wife an accumulation of all womanly graces; he saw in her the ideal woman, in all the world the only one he could have loved and courted, fought for and died for. Yet she was wholly inaccessible, even in dreams! She was as good as she was beautiful, as true as she was winsome. Even had she not been so, his hands were tied by loyalty to his friend. Some of you will laugh at that. Well, if a man's honor fails him in one direction, I will not trust it in another; for a man is a whole remainder after subtracting all his evil from all his good. But "the flesh is weak." That is the villain's only plea for mercy.

The friend could not conceal it from the wife. *Could* not? I must be careful in my choice of words. Is there anything in the line of right that a man cannot do in such a case? The world is wide—he could have gone away—but *she* was so beautiful and winsome! Nor, as he had not declared himself, could she presume to send him away. He thought he saw in her eyes something of pity, something of warning, something of everything. The suffering wore him out.

But I must return to the beginning and resume my story. I was much prostrated in mind and flesh, and the services of a skilful physician were imminently

needed. With that idea I went to see a famous man, Dr. Brownell, a specialist in matters of the nerves. It may be thought a little peculiar that I went to consult this particular man, but it must be considered that besides being a very skilful physician, he was my friend. There might have been certain reasons why I should not consult him, but we need not discuss them now. His wife was a beautiful woman, and I knew her well —but what in the world has this to do with my visit to her husband?

Brownell was a peculiar man. Though he was the best friend I ever had, there was not a very close intimacy between us, and yet I was nearer to him than was any other of his friends. He was much older than his wife. A kind heart, given force and direction by great wealth, had been exercised by him in my behalf with so intelligent purpose that I was become a man of a little importance in the community.

The physician lived in a fine old house of great size. Not all of it was occupied. He was a tireless collector of curiosities, and had expended a fortune in that pursuit. Few of these were ever shown to his friends, and he never spoke of them, but kept them in out-of-the-way places in the great establishment. He was a reticent man, and many feared him; but I saw in him nothing but goodness and a marvellous skill. So it was upon Dr. Brownell that I called formally as a patient. His office was on the main floor of the house, and consisted of two rooms—a handsomely fitted reception-room, and back of it one in which his patients consulted him. Both were very large. Although I had called and visited very often at his house, I had never been in his office before.

When I entered he was just ready to go out, but he welcomed me with his old-time cordiality.

"Why I am glad to see you," he said, taking my hand; "this is the first time you have honored my office with a call. Come in and rest awhile. You surely haven't come to see me professionally?" He looked closely at me as he asked the question.

"Yes," I replied; "I fear I am in rather a bad way."

His face showed much concern.

"You do look a little shaken," said he, removing one

of his gloves. Then he began, in a deliberate fashion, to make a scientific inquiry into my case. While he was occupied thus, a messenger, all out of breath, arrived to call him to a case of great urgency. Dr. Brownell, seeing the need to hurry, asked me if I could come as well on the following day. Of course I released him. He hurried away, saying:

"I am very sorry to leave you, but it can't be helped. Step into the house and see Mrs. Brownell. I am sure she will be glad to see you. Go through that door—it is the nearest way. You will find the hall a little dark, but go straight ahead, and you will be all right." Then he hurried away, and in a moment was gone.

I went to the door which I understood him to have pointed out. It was in the consultation-room. I discovered that there were two doors close together. I selected the left-hand one. I turned the knob and pulled the door open. The hall beyond appeared to be quite dark, but I remembered what he had said about that, and I felt safe. I stepped into the hall, and instantly the door, which was a heavy affair made of oak, closed upon me, pushing me out of its way into the hall. Then I discovered that I was in absolute darkness, although there was a bright day without. Nevertheless, recalling Brownell's instruction, I went ahead with much confidence. Suddenly, to my infinite amazement, the ground seemed to open, and I plunged headlong downward into a suffocating darkness, at every instant striking cruelly upon hidden obstacles along the way. At last, after having taken what seemed to be a great flight, I came heavily to a stone floor, where the darkness was as dense as ever before I fell. Fright was my first sensation and indignation my next; for was it not likely that Brownell had played some ugly trick upon me? I sat perfectly still for a little while, doing much wondering. There was nowhere the smallest glimmer of light; the darkness was ponderable and terrifying. With it was a silence so vast that the ordinary roaring in my ears became an obtrusive presence.

A little reason at last found exercise in my disordered faculties. I reflected that the abyss into which I had fallen was an unguarded flight of stairs, into which I

had walked in the darkness. A cautious hand-survey verified the belief, for there I lay at the bottom of the stairs. A moment later I remembered that I had noticed two doors, one beside the other. It was very clear that I had made a mistake by choosing a door leading to the cellar. It then was no serious matter at all, and I laughed at myself for my terror. All that was necessary was to ascend the flight, open the door, and emerge by the other. Without any waste of time I went about putting this plan into use; but when I had clambered up the stairs and found the door, I discovered that I was securely locked within this dismal place! There was no knob on the inside at all. My first intention was to get relief by knocking on the door; but there quickly arose two reasons why I should not—no one was within, and, besides, even if I should summon attention, how could I explain my ridiculous plight? My clothing had been torn by my fall, and I knew by the token of a warm, sticky sensation about my face and neck that I had been hurt and was bleeding freely. I was satisfied there must be some way of escape from the cellar without alarming the household, and, though my prison was darker than night, I determined to exhaust this resource before trying the other.

Accordingly I descended the stairs, and, by keeping my hands on one of the walls, began to creep forward, with a careful guard upon the possibility of another flight of stairs. Presently I found a turn in the passage, and followed it on. Then I came to a transverse passage, and was in doubt which way to turn. Meanwhile, the darkness did not relax in the smallest way, and absolute silence surrounded me. I turned to the right, and in that direction, not far away, I saw an exceedingly thin line of light, which I surmised issued from the bottom of a door. I went toward this, and was about to put my hand upon the door, when it occurred to me that caution sometimes was a valuable exercise. Thereupon I knelt and examined the line of light more closely; and it was somewhat disheartening to discover that the light, instead of being white, was yellow. In other words, it was gas-light, and not daylight, that shone beyond the door.

While thus I knelt I thought I heard a certain scur-

rying within. It was a sound not very unlike that which I had heard in the dark passage, and which I had mistaken for automatic aberrations of my hearing sense. Now, the same sound gave me a certain depressing feeling of insecurity, as though a malign mystery, suited to this uncanny place, was preparing a grotesque, and perhaps dangerous, reception for me. Should I abandon this enterprise and seek another door? There was danger that I might not find this one again. Indeed, was there anything to fear? Surely my conscience—— I gently pushed upon the door. It did not open. I found a keyhole and peered through it. A curious, large hall seemed to be beyond, lighted faintly, and I thought I saw the shadowy form of a woman float across the field of vision. Just above the keyhole I found a knob. I turned it, and instantly the door flew open, pulling me violently with it; and before the instinctive movement to seize upon a support and hold it securely permitted me to take my grasp from the knob, I found myself wholly at the mercy of unresisted gravitation, flying undoubtedly downward, if reason is to be accepted, but in all other directions as well, if my feelings had been the ground of judgment. But this time, instead of falling upon a cold, stone floor, I alighted on a deliciously soft carpet, of the thickest and finest rugs; and, for that matter, the distance which I had fallen was in reality quite small.

Upon looking about I found myself in the strangest place it was ever my fortune to see; but before I describe it I must say something in explanation of my unaccountable flight through the air. The floor of this hall was sunk a few feet below the level of the passage by which I had approached, and down from the door led a flight of stone steps, which the pulling of the door had made me to clear as I fell. I had thought that some one was concealed behind the door and pulled it open quickly when I turned the knob; but, upon looking, I saw no one, and I must believe that, for some reason which I shall not attempt to explore, the conduct of the door was guided by a powerful spring.

There was no time for any intelligent kind of thinking, for, besides being in a large hall of extraordinary appearance, I found myself in a company of the most

astonishing people. The walls were covered with curious things from every corner of the world. The roof was perforated with openings, representing stars, animals, angels, demons, and other things. These openings were covered with colored glass of every shade, and above all was the light which shone through the grotesque openings and filled the room with a soft, yellow radiance.

The light was too faint for a fine definition of features, and so I could not then have said that I knew any of the persons present. They were all on the opposite side of the room, and every one of them was looking at me. Some were sitting, others standing, and all were upon an elevated platform which ran around the room. This platform was raised not more than eight inches above the floor.

I scrambled to my feet and looked around upon them, of course expecting that I should be spoken to. But not a word was said and not a movement was made. The whole circumstance was so extraordinary, and the silence and immobility of the assembled people so impressive, that a strange tingling feeling, which all who have been frightened know the nature of, crept up my face and into my hair, and my heart beat with what seemed to be so strong a torsional force that it twisted a sharp pain out of its function. I made an essay of speech.

"This," I said (indignation arising with the emergence of courage), "may be a very amusing pastime for you, but I have it that you are putting a very gross indignity upon me. If Dr. Brownell is in this distinguished company, I would like him to hear me say that I resent being made the victim of this boyish prank for the edification of spectators invited to enjoy my discomfiture, and that I propose, without any loss of time, to give to my resentment such form and character as will cause it to have a disagreeable permanency in his recollection."

This wide-winged and rather silly threat might as well have been spoken to the red dragons and green angels in the ceiling, for not a word or movement did it elicit. I found it easy to speak, but my voice sounded as though it had come from some one else to

me alone, and that made me uncertain that I had spoken at all. But a quickening anger was straining its leash within me, and I made no effort to control it. A sense of outrage, shame, and indignation swept over me; there were things I would not bear. At this moment, Brownell's individuality emerged from the dim shadows of the company, and I walked straight up to him. He looked at me steadily as I approached, the old, good-natured, half-quizzical expression that I knew so well sitting upon his face. I had approached him very near, when an indefinable, violent sensation seized upon me and held me from further advance. Likely it was as much dread as terror; but whatever it was, there I stood grown to the floor, staring in dismay at this silent and motionless man with the quizzical expression. Quite near me was an old man sitting on a chair, his hand resting on a heavy stick. I seized the stick and tried to wrench it from his grasp, intending to brain Brownell with it; but think what must have been my horror to see the old man's arm come away from his body with the stick, the hand still retaining its hold! I threw the stick away with a shudder and went up closer to Brownell. I caught him by the shoulders, and shook him with such violence that his head rolled on the floor at my feet. Then the truth burst through the envelope of my vast and inconceivable stupidity—not all stupidity, for another affliction beset me—these were all wax-figures! I had stumbled into one of those queer nooks in Brownell's house where some of his treasures were stored, and where, in these uncanny ways, he enjoyed himself alone.

The reaction from this discovery was peculiar. At first I laughed, but my laughter became so loud and furious that I saw it was hysteria, and then I had trouble to check it. My head was splitting, and my throat was cracked and burning. Pains of various kinds found employment in torturing me, and they were pains to which I was in nowise accustomed. Therefore, it was necessary that I make haste to escape from this almost unearthly place. The silence and apparent intelligent immobility of the wax-figures were more than depressing. I began to fear, indeed, that, after all, they would

take on life and present some new form of suffering for my torture.

At the end of the hall was a wide door draped with a portière. From where I stood I could see the white satin of a woman's skirt just behind the portière on one side. Evidently no light entered that room, except the weak, diffused light of the demons and angels in the room where I was standing, and hence it was much darker beyond the portières; but, after looking around, I saw that if there were any escape except by the way I had come, it must be through the room in which stood the woman in satin. Yet I feared to enter that room. The dim light, the woman behind the portière—it all looked mysterious and dread-lurking. It was evident that the woman stood, as did the others, on a platform; but was that sufficient upon which to construct a belief that she, too, was wax? And would it not be all the better if she were flesh and blood? Assuredly, for that meant deliverance.

I went, without further thinking, to the portière, and passed within the room, having an unaccountable care that I did not pass too near the woman in satin. I went into the room and looked around for a door. None could I find. My gaze fell upon the woman whose skirt I had seen, and then came upon me the very heaviest blow of all in that day of miseries; for there before me, beautiful and radiant, embodiment of all the finest graces of womankind, unspeakably winsome, and in all possible ways the loveliest woman under the sun, stood the physician's wife. If only it had been she, indeed, instead of an artful wax counterfeit! I stood and admired her to my heart's content, and then I looked another way and continued my search for the door.

In what way soever I turned, I felt that the soft blue eyes of this enchanting figure were upon me. This gave me a certain fear, the meaning of which, beyond a consciousness of extreme nervous irritation, I was not able to understand. My disorder began to take on an exhilaration much like that which comes from hasheesh, imparting a quickening power to my senses and a keen edge to my imagination. A feeling of happy confidence and lively enthusiasm struck off the angles

of the fear which formerly had depressed me, and I became bold, valiant, and adventurous. What an inspiring effect even the wax-image of a beautiful woman may have on a man! I again looked at the figure in satin. Could I have been in error? Was it possible that a wax-figure could be caught stealing a quick glance at me and suppressing a delicious smile? Was this a new Galatea, ready to step from her pedestal and be my devoted slave? . . .

A great hope, so wild that I dared not give it too generous entertainment, leaped up from my heart. Fool or madman—which was I? Though the whole world might be consumed with love of her, *she* would remain steadfast in the way of a wife forever. It was wholly impossible that she should choose this astounding way of letting me know that the one sceret of my life had slipped away from me and had been welcomed into her own life. I gazed upon her, filled with awe. . . . Her head slowly turned, her glorious eyes rested full upon my face, and the sweetest smile that I had ever seen on her beautiful face saturated all my sensibilities with inconceivable delights. There was a meaning in that look and smile that I had never seen before, and the light that shone through it was a welcome to me!

I went closer to her, my feet winged with joy. The smile beckoned, the glance was a reassurance.

"Alice!" I cried.

"I have waited for you long," she answered; and there can be no music on earth so sweet as those words.

I caught her in my arms and drew her to my breast, nearly crushing her. I looked up into her face and she looked down into mine. I drew her from the pedestal. All at once a look of horror came into her face.

"You are bloody!" she cried.

"It is nothing," I protested.

The look of horror became one of terror. "Oh," she said, "there is blood on your face and villainy in your heart! So, this is how you would betray your best friend and wreck my life. I will save him and you." With that I saw something bright and keen glitter a moment in her hand, and in an instant a thing cold and sharp slipped between the ribs of my breast.

I choked; a blindness assailed me, and I felt myself going all at large to the floor.

* * * * * *

Dr. Brownell was sitting beside me in a room of his house, and I was lying in bed with a feeling of great weakness. He saw that I was watching him. He arose and stood over me, and his face showed much relief.

"You are all right now, aren't you, old fellow?" How kind his voice was!

"Yes."

I felt no pain in my breast, but feebly I put up my hand. "Is the wound dangerous?" I asked.

"What wound?"

I made no reply.

"The only wound you had was a slight abrasion of the scalp, and that has been cured a week."

I dared not ask any more questions.

"Alice came in to see you this morning and left these flowers for you. I told her I thought you would be all right to-day, and she will come to see you as soon as I send her word. By the way, old man, that was a curious mistake you made in getting among my wax-figures. We found you unconscious there. In your delirium you must have developed a strong dislike for the figures of Alice and me, as you completely demolished them."

The men who know a story even when it unfolds itself under their very eyes are fewer than we are apt to think. Acton Davies is one of them, however, as witness, this tragedy in inches, which he wrote for the New York *Evening Sun*.

SAWED-OFF.

AMY never called him that, although everybody else in the hotel did. Perhaps that was the very reason why she won his heart. She always called him Ephraim.

"It isn't as though he were a regular dwarf, you know," she used to explain to the other boarders. "The poor fellow is only unnaturally small and stunted. He'd be a giant if he had anything to say about it. And to call him by such a nickname as Sawed-off is an abominable shame. Even though he is a bootblack, he's got feelings, I suppose."

And thereafter, when Amy wasn't present, the girls used to speak of him as "Amy's condensed young man."

But he wasn't a young man, either—he was only a boy somewhere in the neighborhood of eighteen, not over bright, perhaps, nor even especially proficient in his own profession. In his stockings he only stood four feet and six inches, but his heart was not undersized, at all events, no matter how much the rest of his body was.

Amy used French polish upon her shoes, so Sawed-off never had a chance of polishing them, but the boots of her three little children were always polished to a superlative degree. The other boarders grumbled sometimes at their inferior shines, but then they would persist in calling him Sawed-off. So what could they expect?

One evening late in the summer, Rosie, the old cook, came to Amy and told her that poor Sawed-off was really very ill. He had spoken of Amy several times. There was something he wanted to ask her, he said, and so at last, to satisfy him, Rosie had promised that she would ask her just to come and speak to him for a minute or two.

Amy said why of course she would go to him immediately, and followed Rosie to his room at the top of the house. And as they climbed the stairs she was wondering to herself what on earth the boy could have to say to her. Beyond the fact that his mother, before her death, had been cook at the hotel for ever so many years, and that Sawed-off and his brother, who was also dead, had been born and brought up in the room where he now lay, Amy knew literally nothing about him, for he never talked of himself.

His room was a huge, whitewashed place, little better than an attic, and as Amy caught sight of the lad huddled up in one corner of the big, old-fashioned bed, it seemed to her that he looked smaller than ever.

He raised himself on one elbow as soon as he caught sight of her, and his blue eyes grew brighter.

"It's awful good of you to come, ma'am," he exclaimed. "I thought maybe as I was asking too much of you. But I'm mighty glad you've come."

At this point old Rosie slipped away and drew the door to after her.

"That's right," he said, "I'm glad she closed it. Not as I'm afraid of any one's over'earing us, yer know. But there's some'at on the back of that door, ma'am, as 'as to do with what I want to tell yer. See all them pencil marks there, ma'am, with the figures alongside of 'em?" he added, pointing to the panels of the door. "Well, that's where mother used to take our 'ights when Jim and me was little fellers. We was twins—Jim and me was, yer know. And Lord! 'ow set mother used to be on gettin' our measures correct! Hevery year on our birthday she'd stand us up there to see 'ow we was gettin' along. 'No cheatin' now,' she'd call out—and I can 'ear 'er now as plain as anythink: 'No cheatin' now. Ephraim, you stand square on yur toes and 'eels, and, Jim, you 'old yur chin hup.'

"Well, for a long while there, when we was little kids, it was nip and tuck between us. Hup to seven years hold it was neck and neck, and then Jim 'e begins to get a'ead. I got 'andicapped some'ow or other. I wouldn't grow scarce a bit. And then each year as we got holder mother she'd get hup agin the wall and there'd be Jim 'alf a foot a'ead. 'Drat the boy!' mother

would say to me. 'Yer 'aven't growd a hinch.' And then she'd say as 'ow I must 'ave been smokin', and O Lord, wouldn't I 'owl just! It was terrible dis-'eartin', yer know, to 'ave yer mother say that to yer w'en yer was doin' yer hutmost to grow. But Jim, oh 'e was hawful good—'e'd always stand hup for me. 'It haint 'is fault, mother,' 'e'd say. 'It's 'is constitootion, yer know.' Nobody never call me Sawed-off when Jim was around, or else 'e got a clout.

"Well, ma'am, you've only got to look at that door there to see 'ow it all turned hout. Jim 'e kept a growin' and a growin', and me I just stood about stock still. Look at the door, ma'am, it's all writ down."

Amy looked, but she could scarcely see it, her eyes were so full of tears. Sawed-off's life-tragedy was written on that door in an old woman's scrawly hand. On Sawed-off's panel the figures stopped at four feet six, but on the other panel—Jim's—the topmost mark registered five feet ten.

Sawed-off's eyes were fixed longingly upon those figures as he continued: "Mother put that last mark down the day afore 'e went away. I didn't get measured that time. Mother said there wasn't no use. She'd give me hup by that time. But Jim, he went off to Spring 'Ill to work in the mines." Sawed-off stopped for an instant, and then went on: "Three weeks later, ma'am, they brought 'im back to us—dead. There'd been an haccident, nobody knew just 'ow. But Jim was dead—that's all that mother and me knew, and it just was the death of mother, hit was. She didn't outlive 'im by three months. And now, ma'am, from what the doctor said, I know I'm goin', too. Oh, don't yer deny it, ma'am! I know it's true. It might be tomorrow or not for a week, 'e says. Perhaps heven I might go hoff to-night. I ain't complainin'. It's all right, ma'am. But why I sent for you 's just 'ere.

"I've been a-thinkin', ma'am, as 'ow when they come to lay me alongside of Jim in the cemetery there, my grave right next to 'is 'andsome six-foot one will look kind of stubby and sawed-off, just like me. And some'ow it don't seem fair to Jim. For 'im and me was twins, yer know; there ain't no getting hover that. 'E never said nothing about my being such a shorty,

Jim didn't—'e'd 'ave cut his tongue out first—but sometimes when e' didn't know I was lookin', I could see hit in 'is heyes—so, ma'am, I was a'thinkin' as 'ow if you could manage it, seeing as it's forever and ever, I'd like to have my grave made just as long as Jim's.

"It will cost more," he added, while he gazed pleadingly up into Amy's face. "And that's why I sent for you, ma'am. Mr. 'Iggins, yer see, though I know as 'e'll bury me alongside of Jim, 'as 'ad the three of us to do for pretty close together, so I don't like to ask any hextras of 'im. But I've a little money under my pillow 'ere, ma'am, and there's sixty cents comin' to me at the hoffice, and if that ain't enough for the hextra costs, ma'am, why you've always been so kind and good to me, ma'am, that I wouldn't mind takin' a little charity from you, seein' as 'ow it's for Jim's sake. Will you do it for me, ma'am—will you, now?"

She could not answer him in words, but she nodded her head and Sawed-off caught up her hand and kissed it gently.

"God bless you, ma'am. I can't thank yer, for there ain't any words as 'is 'alf big enough. I was goin' to say," he added, with a quizzical little smile, "'as 'ow I'd try to pay it back to yer some day. But I can't heven promise to do that, yer know, seein' as 'ow things is.

"But I've a secret as I must tell you, ma'am, before yer goes away. What do you think now?" he bent forward eagerly and whispered, "I've grown a 'alf hinch. Oh, yes, I 'ave ma'am, upon my soul! I guess it must 'ave been the lyin' a-bed 'as stretched me out. But last night I was lyin' awake here and the moon come shinin' in so bright through the window that I could almost see the writin' on the door. Then all at once I crept out of bed and stood up against the door there and took my measure. I kept my 'and on the place and then I turns round and looks at it. It was a good 'alf hinch above the old one, sure enough. Then I gets a pencil, and just as I starts to mark it down, all of a suddint I seemed to 'ear mother's voice a-calling out just as she used to about standin' square on my toes and 'eels, yer know. Only now she calls out, 'Ephraim, don't you be tryin' to steal a march on my poor dead Jim. You get right back into yur bed!'

"Well, I did, ma'am. I may 'ave been dreamin', but any'ow I couldn't put nothin' down after that. But I was a-thinkin', ma'am, as 'ow afterward, when you come to get the measure for the coffin—you'd better take it hoff the door, ma'am, for that's Jim's correct measure—I was a-thinkin as perhaps you'd chuck down that hextra hinch for me. Both of us bein' dead then, I'm sure mother couldn't object to it.

"Only last week Mr. 'Iggins was saying as 'ow next year he's goin' to pull this old house down hand put a swell one hup in its place. 'E won't want doors if 'e does that, yer know; 'e'll 'ave them curtain businesses all hover. So there's no tellin' what 'ill become of that old door. Maybe it 'ill be chopped into kindling wood or some one may buy it at second 'and. Any'ow, if it's got to go into public, it may as well carry facts as is real facts, so I'd be ever so much obliged to you, ma'am, if, after all's over, you'd write down that hextra 'alf hinch. Now, I won't keep you no longer, ma'am. It's been awful good of you to stay so long. Good-night, ma'am."

But Amy would not bid him good-night. She smoothed his pillows out and gave him his medicine, and then she said that she would go down-stairs for a few minutes and see that the children were all in bed and then she was coming back again to see if there wasn't something more which she could do.

"Don't you 'urry on my account, ma'am," he said, "you've given me your promise, yer know. That's all I want. There ain't a single thing more, ma'am, as you or anybody else can do."

And Sawed-off spoke truly. For presently, when Amy came back again, there was nothing which any one in this world could do for him, except to order his six-foot coffin to be made and jot down on the door as Amy did:

Ephraim, Sept. 20, '90, 4 feet 7.

Perhaps this story from the *True Flag* has no very pointed moral, but it serves to prove that the tobacco habit is sometimes useful, and that nerve is a good thing to have when another man has the "drop" on you.

THE SILVER BULLET.

In 1869 Lawrence Nutting was a United States marshal in the southern district of Virginia. The State was at that time fairly overrun with outlaws of all classes. Bushwhackers, highwaymen, counterfeiters, and "moonshiners" nestled in all the country side among the mountains, and far from towns and cities upon lonely roads; while gamblers and desperadoes swarmed in and about the settlements. Crime was frequent, and the life of a United States officer was a series of stirring adventures, involving great danger and demanding as great tact and personal bravery.

But Nutting proved himself worthy and fit for the office. A young man of temperate habits, quick wits, splendid physique, and dashing courage, he was never at a loss how to act; and the vermin that infested that region soon learned to hate and to fear him intensely.

Many were the expeditions which the officer had led, many his escapes, and many the prisoners safely captured and walled by his efforts. But one man evaded him. The shrewdest and worst "moonshiner" of all was still at large; despite all his efforts Nutting had not yet secured Ruloff Allen.

This man was known throughout the State. His career had been that of a criminal from his birth. In the fastness of southwestern Virginia he manufactured whiskey on a grand scale and was the owner of a dozen or more "queer stills," and snapped his fingers at the law.

Several times had Nutting sought this quarry; twice he had actually caught him, yet twice he had escaped, and at the time of which we speak he was still free.

Nutting sat at his office window one evening musing, half-dreaming, when there fell a light touch on his

shoulder. He started up quickly. A stranger stood before him.

"The United States marshal?" said he, interrogatively.

"Yes, sir," said Lawrence, rising. "Be seated. What can I do for you?"

"I would speak with you alone," he said, glancing around. "I have matters of importance to communicate."

"This office is out of hearing from the street," replied Nutting, "and we are by ourselves. You can speak freely."

The other drew a couple of cigars from his pocket, offered one to the marshal, and lit the other himself. Nutting followed his example. Then the man drew his chair nearer, so that he sat between the officer and the desk whereon lay his belt and pistols, threw open his coat so that the butts of two heavy revolvers might be seen, and blowing the smoke from his cigar said, in a quiet tone, to his companion:

"You are desirous of arresting a noted moonshiner, one Ruloff Allen, are you not?"

"There's no doubt about that," said the marshal, smiling.

"I am the man."

Nutting's cigar never stirred in his lips; his hand did not quiver nor his breath come the quicker. A single sign showed how deeply he was moved; his eyelids dilated, then he laughed soft and low.

"You—you Ruloff Allen! My friend, I know Allen. His hair is red; yours is black. His face bears a scar across the chin; yours a beard. His teeth are broken; yours are perfect. The joke is good, but you are not Allen."

The other hesitated a moment, then striking a wig from his head, a beard from his chin, and removing a single false tooth, he turned again to Nutting, red-haired and smiling.

"And now?"

"You are Allen."

For a full moment neither man moved. It was as though two large tigers gazed at each other. Then the outlaw said:

"Listen! I am armed; you are not. I am fully as desperate a man as the report makes me. I am as strong as you. Do not try to arrest me, for I shall then be obliged to kill you. I came here to have a private talk, but it was necessary you should know who I am. I will not molest you if you will do the same by me, and give me fifteen minutes to escape when we have finished."

Nutting measured his chances. Unarmed in the presence of a man to whom murder was not new, he deemed prudence the better part and replied:

"I agree."

"Good," said Allen, removing his own pistol belt; "your word is equal to mine. We shall both be unarmed. And now I want to tell you a story."

Then he drew his chair still nearer the marshal, and as the twilight fell and night came down he told of his life—a weird, strange history, every line intense with the throbbing passion of a lawlessness which made the man what he was.

The other listened breathlessly, the darkness shrouded both, and the cigars were finished long before the story was ended.

At length, however, the visitor paused, and then concluded as follows:

"So have I lived. As a wild man almost; and that life has for the past five years been more a mania than ever before, but with a method. I am and have been seeking money, and money only. Not so widely different, you will say, from all the world, except that my search was without the pale of the law. And now the end has come. I am rich. I have enough, and now I desire to return to civilization. You can permit it—you can prevent it. I am an outlaw. Very well! I will cease outlawry, I will turn over my stills to the government, will swear a great oath—and keep it, too, for my own interests demand it—to become a worthy citizen, and if you will accept the prodigal son and kill for me the fatted calf of pardon, all will be well. I came here to ask you to intercede for me. Will you do so?"

Nutting hesitated a moment. This man was a veritable Robin Hood. Could he trust him?

The other spoke again.

"Such assistance from an official is what I need, and I can pay for it. If you will get a free pardon for me I will give you five thousand——"

"I cannot do it."

Allen's face paled and his hand crept toward his hip; then restraining himself with a scoffing laugh, he said:

"Be it so. Then we are enemies. I to you and the law; you to me. Remember my fifteen minutes, and beware when next we meet!"

He threw his cloak about him, buckled his pistols at his waist, and disappeared, but as he left the room a little piece of metal fell from his person and rolled unnoticed upon the floor. A minute later the ring of his horse's hoofs sounded through the night as he rode toward the mountains.

The morning following, as Nutting entered his office, his aged servant bowed low before him, extended his brown and wrinkled hand, and said, in an awe-stricken voice:

"Foun' dis on de floor, massa. S'pose him your'n; bad ting, massa, bad—ef ye 'low old nigger to say so."

The marshal leaned forward in surprise. Lying in the outstretched palm of the black was a silver pistol bullet.

"Why, uncle," said he, taking it, "this is not mine!"

"Not your'n, massa! Tank de Lord! I's pleased, I is, massa. Foun' it yer, dough. Dat ar's a sweyside bullet, massa," he continued, lowering his voice to a whisper, while his eyes rolled like ships in the midst of white and seething billows. "I know 'em! My ole massa he had one cast, an' carried it many years. Dey neber kill no one but de fellers dey's made for. Massa John, dough, he didn't get a chance for to use his'n," and the old man chuckled.

"A suicide bullet," said Nutting, with a smile, as he examined the silver sphere. "That's a new idea to me. Why make a special bullet, uncle? I should think one of those deadly enough."

And he pointed toward some of the heavy cartridges belonging to his own pistols which lay on the table near.

"Dey mought miss, massa. You know de debil cares for his own, an' dis bullet is made by his help, at night, in de grabeyard, an' can't miss. I knows 'em, massa. I's seen 'em afore." Then, drawing near, he whispered, "I's made em!"

"And did they do their work?" said Nutting, laughing lightly.

"Dey did, massa."

The officer now opened a drawer in his desk, and took from it an old-fashioned duelling pistol, which he had picked up somewhere, and fitted the bullet into its rusty muzzle.

"It's just the thing, uncle. Bring me my flask, and I'll load it with the suicide bullet. It's best to have it handy if I get the blues." He laughed again.

The servant obeyed.

"No use to fix 'im, massa. 'Twon't only kill de one who it's made for, shuah, an' ye couldn't shoot yourself wid it, nohow."

"Well, uncle, I'll load the smooth-bore, anyway," said the marshal, suiting the action to the word, "and this afternoon we'll try it at a mark. If I miss a half-dollar at a dozen paces, I'll give up that you're right. If I hit, your 'suicide bullet' is no better or worse than a leaden one."

"All right, massa, but you won't hit," replied the old darkey.

Just as Nutting completed the charging of the weapon a visitor called, and it was thrust hurriedly into a pigeon-hole in the desk. His visitor's business detained him from the office until night, and the plan of the morning was forgotten. The duelling pistol with its silver missile lay unnoticed for months in the desk.

The days and weeks passed, summer came and went, and fall ripened the year. A dozen times had the marshal organized expeditions and scoured the country, seeking the notorious Allen, but each time he had returned unsuccessful. One final effort, however, was to be made. Certain information which he knew to be reliable had at last, he felt sure, put the outlaw in his hand, and he looked to his horse's shoes and loaded his pistols with unusual care.

At his orders mounted guards—men on whom he

could depend—patrolled all the roads. Upon the morrow at dawn, with a posse of seven fearless mountaineers, he was to storm the very stronghold of the moonshiners, and to-morrow night would find a vacancy either in the government office or in the ranks of the illicit distillers. The expedition had thus far, Nutting believed, been kept a secret. Because of this he looked forward with strong hopes of success.

The officer sat at his desk writing. He had but a few pages to complete, a letter or two to prepare for the mail, and some memoranda to destroy. He might never sit at that desk again.

As his eyes wandered over the mass of papers, documents, and duplicate reports filed neatly away before him, he suddenly noticed the butt end of his old duelling pistol, half-hidden in one of the compartments, and as the remembrance of how it came there flashed over him he was about to draw it from its hiding-place, when a shuffling step at the door arrested him, and an instant later an aged and bent woman entered the door.

The hour was late, and Nutting regarded the newcomer with surprise as he arose to offer her a chair. She accepted it with a whine of thanks, and sank panting into it. The marshal resumed his seat at the desk.

"Ye are the gov'ment man, I reckon?" said the woman, after a pause, raising a brown and wrinkled face, half-hidden beneath an immense hood and a pair of green spectacles, toward Nutting.

"Yes, madam," replied that worthy.

"I've come a right smart piece to see ye, for an old woman. I'm true grit, I am, but a-getting wore out. These year mountains are a sight steeper than they was forty years ago," and she sighed. "But see here, I'm on business, I am. I want to talk to ye. You don't know me, I reckon?"

"I cannot say that I do," said Nutting slowly.

"I reckon not—as ye never see me before. I am Mrs. Allen—Bethsheby Allen—and my boy, he's Ruloff Allen. Ye hev heard of him, mebbe?" and she paused and gazed cunningly into her listener's face.

"Yes, I know him," and the man's brow darkened.

"Wall, now, I tell ye. It seems yer on a raid arter

him to-morrer—ye see I know a thing or two—an' ye've got the boy badly cooped up this time, shore. Not but what he'll fight, and some on ye may catch suthin' besides moonshiners. My boy is smart, he is, I tell ye, an' he'll tote ye round considerable afore ye gather him in; but he's cooped all the same, and I'm afeared ye'll catch him or kill him. An' I'm his mammy, ye know."

The old hag paused and wiped her eyes. She was a woman, even yet, and Nutting's heart softened toward her.

"What can I do in this matter, Mrs. Allen?" began the marshal. "Your son is a——"

"Never mind what he is—you can save him. He's trapped, catched, cooped. But he's my boy, an' I want ye to let him go. Take his stills an' his whiskey, take everything, but let him go, an' I'll give ye my word—it's good; Bethsheby Allen never broke it yet—that in less than three days we'll be——"

"Mrs. Allen, that is impossible. I'll try not to hurt your son, but capture him I must and shall."

"But if he should capture you, what then?"

At these words the green glasses fell, the hood was thrown back, the bent form became straight, and before the eyes of the dazed officer Ruloff Allen himself stood, a look of deadly hatred on his face, a heavy revolver in his outstretched hand.

Silence reigned a moment as the young man gazed into the deadly tube before him.

"I came here to give you one last chance, and myself the same!" half-hissed the moonshiner. "That chance is lost to both of us. I go back to the mountains and outlawry—you retire from active service. Can you pray? If so, do it now. In three minutes I shall kill you."

Slowly Nutting's eyes ran about the room. Escape was impossible—help would not come. A single cry meant instant death; he was lost! His heart sank.

Suddenly the butt of the old duelling pistol came within the circle of his vision. Cool as his would-be murderer, he turned to him and said, "Will you let me smoke once more?"

The fellow eyed him sharply.

"Smoke? Yes, one cigar," he said, at length. And lowering the muzzle of his weapon, he thrust it into his pocket to supply his victim's wants.

"I have some here," said Nutting; and like a flash his hand shot upward toward the pigeon-hole where lay the old duelling pistol.

"Down with your hand!" cried Allen.

It was too late. There came a sharp and ringing report, a single cry, a dull and sickening thud upon the floor, and all was over.

And the moon, breaking between the rifted clouds without, looked through the open window upon the face of the dead, while Nutting, white and trembling, held in his nerveless hand a smoking pistol.

The silver bullet had found its mark and returned to its owner. The United States marshal was saved.

Remorse sometimes works out queer results—and occasionally reform is one of them. It plays a part in most tragedies, and it certainly does in this one, written for ROMANCE by Lewis W. Smith.

DICK'S GHOST.

ELTON was a shipping-point on the great cattle trail north from Texas. Herds of long-horned steers were driven in from the ranches and every day droves of them were corraled in the stock-yards, in process of being loaded on the cars. Sometimes in a threatened stampede it would be with no little admiration that you watched the cowboy on his fleet bronco, riding round and round the poor bewildered brutes, whose wild dash might at any moment leave him trodden to a shapeless mass in their path; or again, standing upon the elevated plank walk running around the yards, you might have seen, down among the infuriated animals, a reckless human being whose daring made your flesh creep with fear. All this passed away long ago. Fenced farms have taken the place of the open prairie where the cowboy "rounded up" his herds, and an altogether new life has sprung up and crowded out the old; but about the place there linger still mementoes of a by-gone day, wild almost to savagery, if you will, but romantic as all life not overlaid by social conventions must be.

As the cowboy was fearless in facing the long horns and murderous hoofs of his cattle, so was he brave in looking into the barrel of the all-too-quickly-drawn six-shooter. The long ride over the prairies was lonesome, but when he had reached Elton with his charges and had safely loaded them upon the cars, there was fellowship at Dobson's or at the other saloon across the street; and in either the death-dealing bullet might at any moment end all the mad intoxication of this reckless life. But the street was scarcely safer, and it did not offer the delight of clinking glasses and wild tales from the lips of those congregated here from all quarters. So the bar was always crowded and the billiard balls

rolled over the tables to the sound of boisterous laughter, loud oaths, and the click of revolver hammers.

On a night when the revelry was at its highest at Dobson's, the door opened and John Watkins, "Little John," came in. Every one there knew him, and to the mind of no one of them was he anything but clear grit under all circumstances—generally silent and little given to boastfulness. To-night, in answer to the voices whose varied greetings met him he for a time gave no response. He asked the bar-tender for "something warm," and when this had been disposed of turned to the others, saying:

"Boys, you never see me pullin' back in any kind of a deal, but I saw somethin' to-night that makes me feel queer."

This was sufficient to arrest attention and quiet the babble of voices, while he went on to tell how he had been passing along the river bank, and near to an old tree, to which some two months before he had helped to "string up" six miserable wretches whose crimes from horse-thieving down could only be punished by such rude justice, and in the darkness had there seen a figure whose ghost-like appearance had for once given him a feeling of fear. A number of those who now heard him tell of this had been implicated with him in the deed of blood, which now in the light of "Little John's" revelation smote their hardened hearts with a nameless terror. Of the others, many could recall the horror of awakening in the early morning to see the six lifeless bodies hanging upon the one tree by the river side. Of the six one had stirred, even in their hearts, a strange and new compassion. A boy he was, with the down of youth yet on his face, a face that must have been innocent only a few short years before, and had not wholly lost its boyish grace and beauty.

But for all that he died at the rope's end, as bravely and as defiantly as the most vicious among his fellows. His hands were innocent of blood, as was, perhaps, true of no one of the others; but in the eyes of the law to which he was amenable, public sentiment, he was a greater criminal—a horse-thief. To his acquaintances he had been known only as "Jim," but now, at the last, some promptings of their better natures made

them wish to know his name in full and where his home was, in order that his parents or friends might be made acquainted with the fact of his death; but their inquiries only met with the proud bravado of an unflinching refusal to tell them. The voice which had not yet lost its boyish thinness rang firm and clear in its defiance:

"Pull your rope, I'm ready, and you'll never know my name till we meet in hell."

And so the next moment he dangled in the air. The blue eyes that had flashed with so high a daring were glassy and sightless, the fair face was distorted and hideous in its agony, while a shudder ran among his executioners before they turned away to shut out the pitiful sight and to seek forgetfulness around the bar at Dobson's.

All these things came back again to memory at "Little John's" words, and there stole over them, as they stood in little groups, the hush of that superstitious fear and awe that comes the most readily to the ignorant and vicious. So they stood in silence, all eyes upon him who was now waiting for some expression of opinion in regard to that which he had told them. Only the recollections which they shared alike and the serious and disturbed look on the face before them prevented their treating the whole thing as a joke, but not even these things could make any one of them willing to face the ridicule of the others by letting their real feelings be known. But this silence and waiting could not last. Dick Henshaw, feeling that he had now an opportunity to distinguish himself, conquered his fear and its resulting irresolution, and called out with an oath:

"Some fool was tryin' to scare you. You'd ought to shot."

No muscle of "Little John's" face moved, but his hand was placed upon the six-shooter in his belt. Men had died for less taunting words than those, but in a quick change of purpose he said calmly:

"I am glad you can explain it so easily. Perhaps you wish you had been there in my place. I for one should not have regretted it."

A moment the two men looked at each other,

Then Dick stepped to the door, saying in a tone of cutting scorn:

"We'll see what it is that has set your hair on end."

He was gone, and the little altercation having served to restore the general good-feeling, the merriment went on as before. Only "Little John" remained somewhat more thoughtful and less inclined to joviality than was his wont. He laughed, indeed, when the laughter about him made that necessary, but through it all he was thinking of what he had seen and of Dick Henshaw. That individual walked on madly enough for a little way, but as he approached the old tree in whose tragedy he himself had played a part, he found his courage somewhat on the wane. He strengthened himself to go on by cursing "Little John," himself for his faint-heartedness, and the world in general; but this could not prevent his starting with a quake of fear at the sight of what seemed a white or grayish figure but a little distance ahead of him as he neared the tree. There was no moon, and in the darkness he could only perceive a something dim in outline, yet certainly lighter than the surrounding blackness. He stopped and waited, almost breathless, yet wondering that he should be unnerved at so slight a thing. He listened with ears strained to catch the slightest sound, and watched with eyes quick to see any motion that could possibly be perceptible to them. Was he deceived in thinking that he observed a swaying to and fro? Was that a sigh he heard or only the wind among the trees? Involuntarily he put his hand out, but the air seemed still; it could not be the wind.

This was beginning to be unendurable. He could not go farther, and in his heart cursed himself for a coward. Neither could he go back again to encounter the laughter of the "boys" and "Little John's" sarcasm or knowing smile. He could do neither of these things, but he was not for that reason any more willing to be made the victim of a practical joke. He drew his revolver from his belt with a hand that shook as it never had before. Whatever the object which he saw might be, he would soon have the matter settled. A desperate method, perhaps, but his unstrung nerves left no alternative. He would shoot somewhat care-

lessly, not really wishing to injure the man, if such it were, but rather in the hope of bringing about some clearing up of the matter. So he shot and listened; listened and leaned forward to meet the cry that came back to him. He knew it instantly for a woman's voice, finer far than the voices to which his ear was accustomed. For a moment he hesitated, still mastered somewhat by the uncanny feeling which the sound of his pistol-shot had partly dissipated; but the reality of that cry, the human pain in it, made him spring forward the next, remembering only that it was because of him that that cry had been uttered. When he reached her she had fallen insensible, and he bent above her in helpless bewilderment. A woman, and he possibly her murderer! A woman, more womanly than those of his acquaintance; and he rough and vile as he knew himself to be! Could he do more than stand looking down upon her? Dared he take her in his arms even to bear her where she might be cared for? When at last he stooped to lift her up as he must do, when he felt her in his arms, there came back, as with the warm rush of boyhood's first dream, all the tender awe in the presence of true womanhood that had once been his.

He took her to the one hotel, a poor place, but the town offered nothing better. To his surprise the landlady recognized her as one of her guests and showed him the way to her room. She asked him no questions, and he volunteered no information, save the assurance that he would explain it all on the morrow. Then, having asked her to do everything possible for the woman, whom he had now seen to be of middle age, and whose appearance betokened gentle manners, he left her wondering what it all could mean. He had gone but a few steps when he saw a man on horseback coming along the street. In a moment he was beside him.

"I must have your horse for a few hours," he said. The rider's angry refusal was emphasized by the bound of his animal under the spur; but Dick's revolver covered him, and reining up, he dropped lightly to the ground, smiling as he surrendered the horse to Henshaw.

"Don't say nuthin' about this to the boys, pardner.

I'll be back in three hours, and you can have what you want for the use of her, if it takes the last dollar in my pocket;" and Dick was off on a ride to the fort, ten miles distant, for the army surgeon.

The next day Dick was not seen at his favorite resorts. He astonished those who knew him by staying in his room at the hotel, leaving it only to make inquiries of the landlady in regard to his patient. The surgeon had immediately declared the wound very probably a fatal one, but there was yet a chance that it might not be so, and in the hope of this Dick waited. In some way, though through no agency of his, the story was in every one's mouth long before noon. If it had been a man whom he had shot, it would have created no excitement except among his victim's friends, and even as it was, the sheriff did not think it best to make any arrest; but the strangeness of it all, and the fact that the woman was known to no one, was sufficient to excite a very general interest. So question and answer were exchanged, generally to slight purpose.

But little by little her story became known. The landlady was not her nurse in yain; and the woman was too weak and wretched to drop more than hints of it all; these put together gave them something they could understand. In fact, she was not wholly rational, and very much of what was told from one to another was gathered from her disjointed ravings. Bit by bit it was learned that she was from "'way down East," and had come West to find her boy, the only child of a widowed mother. Unused to travelling, she had spent her money more rapidly than she expected, and the cheap calico dress she wore was one for which she had exchanged a black silk with a fellow-passenger, in order to have in her portmanteau the difference in value between them. The influence of more than one mother's love, the memory of more than one far-away home, was in the purse that "Little John" made up for her. One or two suggested their visiting upon Dick some penalty for his part in the affair, but for the most part they pitied him as well, having regard to the anxiety and remorse visible in his face in the few occasional moments when they saw him. Not for a long time had Elton been so quiet as it was that day, with the men

collected in little groups and silenced by thoughts that were new and strange.

All that night Dick sat within easy call of the watchers by the bedside. If this woman should die, something more terrible than any ghostly vision would be with him, and that forever. And whether she lived or died, in the long vigils of that night he made to himself the solemn promise that Elton should see him no more forever; that he would seek the home of his boyhood and its inspiration for good.

As the night waned and daylight came creeping over the earth, it became almost a certainty that the woman must die. In the knowledge of this Dick at last went and lay down, hoping to sleep if sleep were possible; but it was not permitted to him to know what was soon revealed to all others. To her for whose life he would now have given his own had come also the knowledge that she could not live, and almost the last care and thought of mother-love was in her expressed wish that she might be buried by her boy, to see whose grave it now appeared that she had come so far and dared so much. And her boy was "Jim." How the knowledge of his fate had come to her could not be told, but among those to whom it was known there was some one who was more a friend than he cared to seem, and whose sad tidings, however communicated, had brought this result.

At four o'clock that afternoon she died. A little later "Little John" was coming from the hotel when Charlie Carter met him. He read the news and his thought in his face.

"He was only a boy," he said.

"Yes, and worth a dozen slinkin' cowards like you an' me."

Then they were silent as they walked on together, for both remembered that night when a splendid daring in two blue eyes had challenged their admiration and yet had not availed to save a life.

Two days later a long procession filed out of the hotel, where the chaplain from the fort had read a short service for the dead; a long procession headed by a coffin carried by six men. Those who formed this procession were on foot, though the cemetery was

a mile distant. Only Dick Henshaw, riding alone behind them all, failed in this mark of respect for the dead. He had been silent, strangely silent, through it all, and now the eyes that were turned back to him were full of questioning, questioning that he neither saw nor cared for. At the cemetery he rode up beside the grave during the burial service, and when that was over and the clods of dirt were falling upon the coffin, he loosened the belt about his waist and dropped it, with what it held, into the open grave. Then turning his horse without a word, he gave it the spur and dashed off across the prairie. Slowly those who had seen the dead body laid in its last resting-place turned toward the town, but often their backward gaze sought out a horseman growing smaller and smaller in the distance, until at last they could discern him only as a speck on the far eastern horizon.

A reputation for bravery is often very easily won, and this man got his reputation and the dearest wish of his heart at the same stroke. His adventure is described by Guy de Maupassant; the translation was made for the *Boston Transcript* by Miss C. B. Browne.

WALTER SCHNAFFS' ADVENTURE.

EVER since he entered France with the invading army, Walter Schnaffs had considered himself the unhappiest of men. He was stout, walked with difficulty, puffed a good deal, and suffered much from his feet, which were flat and very fat. He was, besides, of a peaceful and kind disposition, not at all heroic or warlike, father of four children whom he adored, and husband of a fair young wife, whose kisses and caresses and thoughtful care he missed sadly every day. He liked to go to bed early and get up late, to eat good things at his ease, and to drink beer in the breweries. He believed, moreover, that everything worth having ended with life, and he cherished in his heart a deep hatred, which was both instinctive and rational, for cannons, guns, revolvers and swords, and, above all, for bayonets, for he felt that he was not able to wield that weapon quickly enough to defend his large stomach.

And when, at nightfall, he went to bed on the ground, rolled up in his cloak beside his snoring comrades, he thought for a long time of those he had left behind, and of the dangers which surrounded his path. If he should be killed, what would become of the little ones? Who then would feed them and bring them up? At that very time they were not rich, in spite of the debts which he had contracted before leaving home in order that they might have some money.

And sometimes Walter Schnaffs wept. At the beginning of each battle his legs felt so weak that he would have fallen if he had not feared that the whole army would pass over his body. The whistling of the balls made his hair stand on end.

And so for months he lived in a state of fear and anguish.

The main body of the troops was advancing toward Normandy, and one day he was sent to reconnoitre with a small detachment which was simply to explore a part of the neighborhood and then to fall back again.

Everything seemed quiet in that section, and nothing indicated an organized resistance, but just as the Prussians were calmly entering a little valley, crossed occasionally by deep gullies, a brisk firing brought them to a stand-still, cutting down a score of their number, and a body of sharpshooters, rushing out from a handful of trees, charged them with bayonets fixed.

Walter Schnaffs at first remained motionless, so surprised and desperate that he did not even think of flight. Then a mad longing to run away seized him, but he thought instantly that, in comparison with the thin Frenchmen who were coming on like a flock of leaping goats, he would run like a tortoise.

Just then, six steps ahead of him, he saw a large gully filled with brushwood covered with dried leaves, and into this he jumped with both feet, without even stopping to think of its depth, as one might leap into a river from a bridge. He went like an arrow through a thick growth of vines and sharp briars which scratched his face and hands, and sat down hard on a bed of stones.

Looking up immediately, he saw the sky through the hole which he had made. That tell-tale hole would betray him, and he crawled along on his hands and feet, at the bottom of the ditch, under the roof made by the interlacing branches, going as fast as he could, away from the fighting. After a while he stopped and sat down again, squatting like a hare in the tall, dry grass. For some time he still heard the shots, cries and moans. Then the sounds of the struggle grew fainter and ceased. All was calm and quiet again.

Suddenly something stirred close by him and gave him a frightful start. It was a little bird which had perched on a branch, and rustled the dead leaves.

For nearly an hour Walter Schnaffs' heart beat with great bounds.

The night was coming on, filling the gully with shadows, and the soldier began to reflect. What would become of him? What should he do? And how? And

where? And must he begin again that horrible life of anguish, terror, fatigue and suffering which he had led since the beginning of the war? No! He no longer had the courage and energy necessary to bear the marches and face the incessant dangers.

But what could he do? He could not stay in this ditch and conceal himself until the war was over. No indeed. If he had not been obliged to eat, that prospect would not have disturbed him; but he *was* obliged to eat, to eat every day.

And so he found himself alone, armed, in uniform, in the enemy's country, far from those who could defend him. He shivered to think of it.

Suddenly he thought, "If I were only a prisoner!" and he was filled with a sudden, violent longing to become a prisoner. A prisoner! He would be saved, fed, lodged, sheltered from shots and sabres, without any further apprehension, in a comfortable, well-guarded prison. To be a prisoner! What a glorious dream! And he immediately decided to make himself a prisoner. He got up, resolved to carry out his plan without a moment's delay.

But suddenly he stopped motionless, assailed by disagreeable thoughts and new terrors. Where was he to go to make himself a prisoner? In which direction? And how? And frightful pictures of death rushed into his mind. He would run great risks in venturing alone about the country in his spiked helmet. What if he should meet some peasants? As soon as they saw a wandering, defenceless Prussian, they would kill him like a stray dog. They would murder him with their pitchforks, their pickaxes, their scythes, their shovels! They would reduce him to a pulp in their rage at their country's defeat. What if he should meet sharpshooters? They, madmen without law or discipline, would shoot him as soon as they saw him to amuse themselves, to pass away the time, for the fun of the thing.

And he fancied himself already standing against a wall, opposite to a dozen gun-barrels, whose little black, round holes seemed to be looking at him. And if he should meet the French army itself! The vanguard would take him for a scout, for some bold and crafty soldier reconnoitering alone, and they would

shoot him down. And he heard already the irregular firing of the soldiers, hidden in a thicket, while he, standing in the middle of the field, sank down, riddled like a skimmer by the balls which he could feel entering his flesh.

He sat down again in desperation. His situation seemed hopeless to him.

Night had by this time quite settled down—dumb, black night. He did not move, but trembled at every slight and unknown sound which was heard in the darkness. A rabbit that struck against the edge of his burrow nearly put him to flight. The hooting of the owls tore his soul with sudden fears, as painful as wounds. He strained his large eyes to try to pierce the gloom, and every moment he thought he heard a footstep near him.

After endless hours and tortures of the damned, he saw the sky growing light through his roof of underbrush. At that a great relief filled him. His muscles relaxed, and he stretched himself with a lightened heart. His eyes closed, and he slept.

When he awoke the sun seemed to be almost overhead; it must be noon. No noise broke the dull quiet of the fields, and Walter Schnaffs discovered that he was seized with sharp hunger.

He yawned, his mouth watering at the thought of the good sausages that the soldiers had, and his stomach felt emptier than ever.

He rose, walked a few steps, found that his legs were weak, and sat down again to think. For two or three hours he weighed the pros and cons, changing his mind every minute, hesitating, unhappy, and distracted by the most conflicting emotions.

One idea seemed to him sufficiently practical. It was to watch until some unarmed villager should pass by, one who had no dangerous farming tools with him, and then to run out and put himself in his hands, making him understand that he surrendered himself.

Then he took off his helmet, the spike of which was likely to betray him, and thrust his head out of his hole with infinite precaution.

Not a soul was to be seen. Yonder, at the right, the smoke rose toward the sky from the roofs of a

little village, smoke from the kitchen fires! At the left he saw, at the end of an avenue of trees, a large château, flanked with towers.

He waited thus until evening, suffering frightfully, seeing nothing but flocks of crows, hearing nothing but the complaining rumbles of his inner man.

And once more night fell around him. He stretched himself at the bottom of his retreat, and slept an uneasy sleep, haunted by nightmares, the sleep of a famished man.

Dawn broke again above his head.

Once more he took up his post of observation. But the country was as deserted as it had been the night before, and a new fear possessed him, the fear of dying of hunger! He saw himself stretched at the bottom of his hole, flat on his back, with his eyes closed. Then animals, little animals of all sorts, drew near his corpse and began to eat it, attacking it everywhere at once, and crawling under his clothes to gnaw the cold flesh, and a great crow was picking out his eyes with his sharp beak.

This thought nearly maddened him, for he feared that he would be overcome with weakness, and become unable to walk. And he was quite determined to hurry to the village, to dare all, to brave all, when he saw three peasants coming toward the fields with their pitchforks on their shoulders, and he drew back into his hiding-place.

But as soon as evening darkened the plain, he crawled slowly out of the ditch, and started off toward the distant château, preferring to go there rather than to the village, which seemed to him as formidable as a den of tigers.

The lower windows of the château were lighted up. One of them was open, and a strong odor of roast meat came from it, an odor which, rushing through the nostrils of Walter Schnaffs, and penetrating to the depths of his stomach, made him impatient, made him pant for breath, drew him irresistibly forward, and filled his heart with a desperate courage.

Suddenly, without stopping to think, he appeared with his helmet on, in the open window. Eight servants were seated at dinner, round a large table. All

at once a nurse stopped open-mouthed, dropping her glass, and stared fixedly ahead of her. All eyes followed hers.

They saw the enemy! Heavens! The Prussians were attacking the château!

There was at once a cry, a single cry, composed of eight cries uttered together by different voices, a cry of frightful terror, then a confused rising, and a stampede toward the door at the back of the room. Chairs were knocked down, the men upset the women and rushed over them, and in two seconds the room was empty, abandoned, with the table covered with food staring in the face the astonished Walter Schnaffs, who was still standing in the window.

After an instant of hesitation he climbed in and went toward the table.

His great hunger made him as weak as a man in a fever, but he was still paralyzed by terror. He listened.

The whole house was in a tumult; doors were slamming, and rapid footsteps were heard overhead. The uneasy Prussian listened to these noises, and heard dull sounds as if bodies were falling into the soft earth at the foot of the walls, human beings who had leaped from the story above.

Then all movement, all the commotion, stopped, and the great château became as silent as a tomb.

Walter Schnaffs seated himself before a full plate and began to eat. He ate in large mouthfuls, as if he were afraid of being interrupted too soon, before he had had enough. He threw morsels into his wide-open mouth with both hands, and lumps of food went down one after another into his stomach, stretching his throat as they passed. Occasionally he stopped, almost bursting like the distended hose pipe, and cleared out his throat with a draught of cider, as they wash out a stopped-up conduit. He emptied all the plates, all the dishes, all the bottles; then, satiated with eating and drinking, stupefied, flushed, shaken by hiccoughs, his mind uneasy and his tongue thick, he unbuttoned his uniform to breathe more easily, incapable of taking a step. His eyes closed, his thoughts grew confused, he leaned his heavy head on his arms folded on the table, and soon lost all idea of persons and things.

The crescent of the waning moon lighted the sky indistinctly above the trees of the park. It was the chilly hour which precedes the dawn.

Silent shadows were gliding about in the thicket, and every now and then a moonbeam made a steel-point gleam in the darkness.

The quiet château raised its great black silhouette against the sky. Two windows only on the ground floor were lighted. Suddenly a voice of thunder shouted, "Forward! To the assault, comrades!" And in an instant the doors, the shutters, the windows gave way under the flood of men which rushed forward, burst open, broke down everything and invaded the house. Instantly, fifty soldiers, armed to the teeth, rushed into the kitchen where Walter Schnaffs was sleeping peacefully, and placed against his breast fifty loaded guns, knocked him down, rolled him over, seized him and bound him from head to foot. He panted with astonishment, too much bewildered to understand what was going on, knocked about, beaten, and wild with fear.

Suddenly, a large soldier, much bedecked with gold, planted his foot on his stomach, crying out—

"You are my prisoner! Surrender!"

The Prussian heard only the one word, "prisoner," and he groaned, "Ya, ya, ya!"

He was lifted up, bound to a chair, and examined with lively curiosity by his captors, who were blowing like whales. Several of them sat down, overcome by emotion and fatigue. He could smile now, sure of being a prisoner at last.

Another officer came in and announced—

"Colonel, the enemy has fled; several seem to have been wounded. We are masters of the place."

The large officer wiped his forehead and cried "Victory!" And he wrote in a little memorandum book which he took out of his pocket—

"After a desperate struggle, the Prussians were put to flight, carrying with them their dead and wounded, estimated at fifty men. Several remain in our possession."

"What orders shall I give?" said the young officer.

"We are going to fall back, to avoid a renewed at-

tack with artillery and superior force," answered the colonel, and he gave the order to retire.

The column formed again under the shadow of the walls of the château, and began to move, surrounding Walter Schnaffs, who was bound and guarded by six soldiers, revolver in hand.

Scouts were sent out to reconnoitre, and they advanced cautiously, halting from time to time.

At daybreak they reached the préfecture of La Roche-Oysel, whose National Guard had accomplished this feat of arms.

The anxious and much excited townspeople were expecting them. When the prisoner's helmet was seen loud outcries were raised. The women held up their hands, the old ones wept, and an old man threw his crutch at the Prussian and wounded one of his guards in the nose. The colonel shouted, "Keep the prisoner safe!"

They came at last to the town hall. The prison was opened, and Walter Schnaffs, freed from his bonds, was put in it. Two hundred armed men mounted guard around the building. Then, in spite of the symptoms of indigestion which tormented him, the Prussian, wild with joy, began to dance madly about, waving his arms and legs, and laughing crazily, until he fell in a heap, quite exhausted.

He was a prisoner. Saved!

This is how the Château of Champignet was recaptured from the enemy after only six hours of occupation.

Colonel Rotier, cloth merchant, who managed the affair at the head of the national guard of La Roche-Oysel, was decorated.

Perhaps this tale has a moral—most good ones have. It is at least interesting and amusing, and was written by Austyn Granvi le for the Chicago *Journal.*

A NAPOLEON OF FINANCE.

When an Englishman fails in business he accepts a clerkship without a murmur. The idea never occurs to him that he can engage in any enterprise unless he has capital behind him. When an American fails, he accepts a clerkship only as a last expedient. The mere want of capital seldom deters him, however, from immediately having another turn to with fortune.

Mr. Biggs was an American. He was an American who had failed in business. I met him when he was teetotally stripped of everything save his consummate faith in his own ability. Mr. Biggs believed in himself thoroughly. He did it so thoroughly when I saw him that I got to believing in him too. I believed in Mr. Biggs to exactly the extent of fifty dollars. Shortly after that I went to Europe. It was eight months before I returned.

I thought I would go and see Biggs. There was no occasion to hunt him up. A dozen friends I had met on the street had told me of his wonderful success.

On the fifty dollars Mr. Biggs had succeeded in establishing on a firm footing a newspaper property that netted him four times that amount per week. He was the proprietor of "The Family Footstool."

Biggs told me how it was done. There is nothing like business.

"How to invest your fifty dollars," said Biggs, "was a question which vexed my soul for at least forty-eight hours after you went to Europe. It was 'sticky' money. In the speculative world money that is earned by real hard, honest work is supposed to be endowed with superior qualities. It doesn't melt away like the other kind. With us it bears about the same relation to other kinds as Federal scrip to Confederate during the war. I looked you up with the idea of striking

you for a five, but made it fifty when I found you were flush. There it is. Much obliged. You'll have to take it in guesses, though."

Mr. Biggs thereupon handed me sundry rolls of silver, which contained quarters. He seemed to revel in that particular denomination of coin, and presently you shall know why.

"After I left you," pursued Mr. Biggs, "I cast about for the best way to get a start. I determined to publish this paper, 'The Family Footstool.'"

"What, without capital?"

"Not without capital. I had quite a deal of it. Cash isn't everything. Cheek and credit are. I had these rooms furnished, as magnificently as you now see them, for an immediate outlay of twenty dollars—the rest of the bill to be paid on instalments. The rest of the money I hung on to like grim death. It was expended quite judiciously in improving my personal appearance by the addition of a new spring overcoat and a silk hat. A silk hat, properly worn, can be made an incalculable source of credit.

"I sat down and drew up the following advertisement:

"'Which Is It? "As White as a Sheet," or "As White as Snow?" Two thousand dollars will be given in cash as follows: To the person who first answers this question correctly $1000; to the second $750; to the third $250. Each guess must be accompanied by twenty-five cents which will entitle the sender to six months' subscription to "The Family Footstool," the brightest, newsiest periodical in America.'

"I took my advertisement to an advertising agent, a total stranger to me, but a man who knew about business. He inserted this advertisement in 200 newspapers, and I went to the office to wait.

"My thirty dollars had dwindled to almost nothing; the girls I had been compelled to hire to address wrappers for my new paper, not having received their pay, were growing more and more insolent, when one evening I got a letter from the advertising agent:

"'Your ad. was out in Babbit's list yesterday. Look out for squalls.'

"Next morning there were signs of life in the office

of 'The Family Footstool.' A message had arrived from the post-office.

"'Very large mail here for you. Please send and get some.'

"I sent Tom, the office boy. He returned empty-handed. I had been expecting great things. My face fell.

"'Where are the letters?'

"'They want us to take 'em all at onst,' says Tom. 'I guess I will have to get a wagon.'

"It didn't quite come to that; but there were 12,000 letters, and each one of them contained a quarter and the words: 'As White as a Sheet,' or 'As White as Snow.' That gave me a paid circulation to start with of 12,000.

"It was only the commencement of an era of unexampled prosperity, however. The question, 'As White as a Sheet,' or 'As White as Snow,' seemed to have agitated the whole nation. The second day's mail, if possible, was heavier than the first; the third, fourth, fifth and sixth showed no signs of falling off. On the third day I opened a bank account; by the end of the month 'The Family Footstool' had a big sum to its credit.

"The joke of the whole thing was, however, that up to this time 'The Family Footstool' was a myth. It began to dawn upon me that it was necessary to give my subscribers something in the shape of reading matter. I called on a newspaper friend of mine and got a bundle of exchanges, bought a paste-pot and a pair of shears, and in half a day had produced that. What do you think of her?"

Mr. Biggs took from a large pile quite a tolerable-looking sheet. Conspicuous upon one of its advertising pages was an enormous cut of an animal which closely resembled an English hedge-hog. This was labeled: "How Many Quills Upon the Fretful Porcupine?"

"Every one will try and guess that," said Mr. Biggs. "I have not had time to procure a porcupine yet, but shall get one and have him carefully counted. You see nothing could be fairer. What do you think of her?"

I looked at Biggs steadily for a moment or two.

"Whose article is this in your paper denouncing the Louisiana lottery?"

A fine flush of righteous indignation spread over Mr. Biggs' countenance.

"It is mine. Infernal scoundrels. Such people deserve to be driven out of the country."

I bade Mr. Biggs good-by. On my way down-stairs I met a quiet, sober-looking individual coming up, with brass buttons on his cap, and two men in plain clothes with him.

Mr. Biggs hasn't bought his porcupine yet. I have since learned that the quiet man with the brass buttons was a United States Government Inspector.

Poor Biggs has been arrested for attempting to swindle the public through the mails. Is it possible that a man of his ability could be guilty of such conduct?

I am very sorry. I would have paid a quarter myself to have found out how many quills there were on that fretful porcupine.

And so they were married; whether or not they lived happily ever after, Mr. Richard Marsh, who wrote the story for the *Gentlemen's Magazine*, does not inform us. Perhaps there are enough facts given to enable the reader to form his own opinion.

MAGICAL MUSIC.

I.

Miss Macleod passed the newspaper to her nephew.

"Look at that," she said. She had her finger on an advertisement. He looked at it. This is what he read:

"A clergyman, having a large family entirely dependent on him, is compelled to sacrifice a unique set of apostle spoons. Twelve large, twelve small, silver gilt, in handsome case. Being in urgent want of money, a trifle will be accepted. Quite new. Would make a handsome present. Approval willingly. Letters only, Pomona Villa, Ladbroke Grove, W."

"What do you think of it?" inquired the lady.

The Rev. Alan smoothed the paper with his hand.

"Not much," he ventured to remark.

"Put on your hat and come with me. I'm going to buy them."

"My dear aunt!"

"They will do for a wedding present for Clara Leach. Other people can marry, if you can't."

The Rev. Alan sighed. He had been having a bad quarter of an hour. He was a little, freckled, sandy-haired, short-sighted man; one of those short-haired men whose spectacles require continually setting in their place on the bridge of the nose. Such as he was, he was the only hope of an ancient race—the only male hope, that is.

The Macleods of Pittenquhair predated the first of the Scottish Kings. Fortunately for themselves, they postdated them as well.

For a considerable portion of their history, the members of that time-honored family had been compelled, in the Sydney-Smithian phrase, to cultivate their great-

ness on a little oatmeal—for want of cash to enable them to indulge in any other form of cultivation. But in these latter days they had grown rich, owing to a fortunate matrimonial speculation with a Chicago young lady whose father had something to do with hogs. The lady's name was Biggins—Cornelia P. Biggins—the P. stood for Pollie, which was her mother's name; the "front" name came from history. The particular Macleod who had married her had been christened David. In his person he resolved that the ancient family glories should reappear and—more. But in these cases it is notorious that man only proposes—his wife never bore him a child. To make matters worse he only outlived Mrs. Macleod six months, so that he never had a decent chance to try his luck again.

David had a brother. Being a childless man, and desirous to restore the ancient grandeur, one would have thought that he would have left his wealth to his brother, who wanted it if ever a man did yet. But, unfortunately, Alan was not only an unredeemable scamp —which might have been forgiven him, for David was by no means spotless—but also the two brothers hated each other with a truly enduring brotherly hatred. Nor had Alan improved matters by making public and unpleasant allusions to hogs and swine, not only on the occasion of David's marriage, but on many occasions afterward. So it came to pass that when David was gathered to his fathers his brother's name was not even mentioned in his will. All his wealth was left to his sister Janet.

In course of time Alan died abroad—very much abroad, and in more senses than one. Then, for the first time, Janet appeared upon the scene. She paid for her brother's funeral,and took his one child, a boy, back with her to England. The child's mother, who was nothing and nobody, had died—charitable people said murdered by her husband—soon after her infant's birth. So his aunt was the only relative the youngster had.

Janet was a spinster. She had ideas of her own, and plenty of them. Her dominant idea was that in her nephew the family sun should rise again in splen-

dor. But alas for the perversity of fate! The boy passed from a public shool to the university, and from the university—after a struggle in which he showed himself, in a lymphatic sort of way, as obstinate as one of Mrs. David's father's pigs—into the church. This was bad enough for a son of his father, and the heir to Pittenquhair and £10,000 a year, but what followed was infinitely worse. He became a ritualist of the ritualists—more Roman than the Romans—and the motto which he nailed to the mast was "Celibacy of the Clergy."

Her nephew's conduct almost drove Miss Janet mad. Two wives she might have forgiven—but none! In season and out of season she preached to him the duty of marriage; but what she regarded as a duty he regarded as a crime. She spoke of an heir for Pittenquhair; his thoughts were of something very different indeed. To speak of disinheriting him was to pander to his tastes. The income from his curacy was £70 a year—and he lived on it. The money sent him by his aunt he surrendered to the church and the poor. What availed it to preach of disinheritance to a man who behaved like that? And yet, in his own peculiar way, he was a good nephew to his aunt. He was the meekest, ugliest, shyest, awkwardest of men.

It was the second day of his stay under his aunt's hospitable roof in Cadogan Place. From the moment of his arrival she had continually reviled him. She had suggested as wives some two-score eligible young women, from earls' daughters to confectioners' assistants. She had arrived at that state of mind in which, if he would only marry, she could have welcomed a cook. In his awkward, stammering way he had vetoed them all. Then she had rated him for an hour and three-quarters by the clock. Finally, exhausted by her efforts, she had caught up the paper in a rage. The Rev. Alan watched her in silence as she read it, fingering a little book of prayers he had in his waistcoat pocket.

All at once she thrust the advertisement sheet of the paper underneath his nose, with the exclamation:

"Look at that!"

He looked at it, and had read the advertisement reproduced above.

"Don't sit there like a dummy," observed Miss Macleod, whose English, in her moments of excitement, was more than peculiar. "Go and get the thing that you call a hat! Hat!" Miss Macleod sniffed: "If you had appeared in the streets in my days with such a thing on your head people would have thought that Guy Fawkes' day was come again."

The Rev. Mr. Alan was still studying the paper.

"But, my dear aunt, you are not seriously thinking of paying any attention to such an advertisement as that?"

"And why not? Isn't the man a clergyman?"

"I can't think that a priest——"

"A priest!" cried Miss Macleod, to whom the word was as a red rag to a bull. "Who spoke about a priest?"

As Miss Macleod grasped her nephew by the shoulder with a sufficiently muscular grasp, the Rev. Mr. Alan put on his hat and went with her.

II.

They walked all the way—it was some distance from Cadogan Place to Ladbroke Grove. There was not much conversation—what there was was not of a particularly cheerful kind. The day was warm. The lady was tall, the gentleman short. Miss Macleod was a first-rate pedestrian; the Rev. Mr. Alan was not good at any kind of exercise. By the time they reached their journey's end he was quite in a pitiable plight. He was bedewed with perspiration and agitated beyond measure by the rather better than four miles an hour pace which his aunt would persist in keeping up.

Pomona Villa proved to be a little house which stood back at some distance from the road. Just as they reached it, the door was opened, shut again with a bang, and a gentleman came hastening out of the house as though he were pressed for time. He was a tall, portly person, with very red whiskers, and a complexion which was even more vivid than his whiskers. He was attired in what might be called recollections of clerical costume, and was without a hat. He

appeared to be very much distressed, either in body or in mind. Just as he laid his hand on the handle on one side of the gate, Miss Macleod grasped it on the other. Brought in this way unexpectedly face to face, he stared at the lady, and the lady stared at him.

"She's at it again!" he cried.

"Sir!" exclaimed Miss Macleod. She drew herself up.

"I beg your pardon." The gentleman on the other side of the gate produced a very dirty pocket-handkerchief and mopped his head and face with it. "I thought it was a friend of mine."

"Is this Pomona Villa?" asked Miss Macleod.

The bare-headed man looked up and down, and round and about, and seemed as though he were more than half disposed to say it wasn't. But as the name was painted over the top bar of the wooden gate, within twelve inches of the lady's nose, he perhaps deemed it wiser to dissemble.

"What—what name?" he stammered.

"I've come about the apostle spoons."

"The apostle spoons! Oh!" The bare-headed man look blank. He added in a sort of stage whisper aside, "Letters only."

"Perhaps you will allow me to enter."

Miss Macleod did not wait for the required permission, but pushed the gate open and entered. Her nephew followed at her heels. The bare-headed man stared at the Rev. Alan and the Rev. Alan at him—one seemed quite as confused as the other.

"Can I see the spoons?" continued Miss Macleod.

"Eh—the fact is—eh—owing to distressing family circumstances—eh—it is impossible——"

What was impossible will never be known, for at that moment the door was opened and a woman appeared.

"If you please, mum, Miss Vesey says will you walk in? She's upstairs."

Miss Macleod walked in, her nephew always at her heels. The bare-headed man stared after them, as though he did not understand this mode of procedure in the least.

"Up the stairs, first door to the right," continued

the woman who had bade them enter. As, in accordance with these directions, Miss Macleod proceeded to mount the stairs, the woman, who still stood at the open door, addressed herself to the bare-headed man at the gate. Her words were sufficiently audible:

"You brute," she said, and banged the door in his face.

Seemingly unconscious of there being anything peculiar about the house or its inhabitants, Miss Macleod strode up the stairs. The Rev. Alan, conscious for himself and his aunt as well, crept uncomfortably after. The first door on the right stood wide open. Miss Macleod unceremoniously entered the room. Her nephew followed sheepishly in the rear.

The room was a good-sized one and scantily furnished. One striking piece of furniture, however, it did contain, and that was a grand piano. At the moment of their entrance the instrument stood wide open, and at the key-board was seated a young lady.

"I am Miss Vesey," she observed, without troubling herself to rise as the visitors entered.

Miss Macleod bowed. She appeared about to make some remark, possibly with reference to the apostle spoons; but before she could speak Miss Vesey went on:

"That is my father you saw outside—the Rev. George Vesey. He's a dipsomaniac."

Miss Macleod started, which, under the circumstances, was not unnatural. Her nephew stared with all his eyes and spectacles. Miss Vesey was a fine young woman, about nineteen years of age. The most prominent feature in her really intellectual countenance was a pair of large and radiant black eyes.

"I'm engaged in his cure," she added.

"I have called," remarked Miss Macleod, perhaps deeming it wiser to ignore the young lady's candid allusion to her father's weakness, "with reference to an advertisement about some apostle spoons."

Miss Vesey, still seated on the music stool, clasped her hands behind her head.

"Oh, that's one of his swindles," she said.

"One of his swindles!" echoed Miss Macleod.

"He's agent for a Birmingham firm. He finds it a

good dodge to put in advertisements like that. Each person who buys thinks she gets the only set he has to sell; but he sells dozens every week. It's drink has brought him to it. But I'm engaged in curing him all round. The worst of it is that when I begin to cure him he runs away. He was just going to run away when you came to the gate."

"If what you say is correct," said Miss Macleod grimly, "I should say the case was incurable—save by the police."

"Ah, that's because you don't understand my means of cure; I'm a magician."

"A magician!"

There was a pause. Miss Macleod eyed Miss Vesey keenly, Miss Vesey returning the compliment by eyeing her.

Miss Macleod was a woman of the day. Openly expressing unbelief in all the faiths that are old, she was continually on the lookout for a faith that was new. She had tried spiritualism and theosophy. She had sworn by all sorts of rogues and humbugs—until she found them out to be rogues and humbugs, which, to her credit be it said, it did not take her long to do. Just at that moment she was without a fetich. So that, when Miss Vesey calmly announced that she was a magician, she did not do what, for instance, that very much more weak-minded person than herself, her nephew, would have done—she did not promptly laugh her to scorn.

"What do you mean by saying you're a magician?" she inquired.

"I mean what I say. I have my magic here."

Miss Vesey laid her hand on the piano.

"I suppose you mean that you're a fine pianist."

"More than that. With my music I can do with men and women what I will. I can drive the desire for drink out of my father for days together; I can make him keep sober against his will."

Miss Macleod turned toward her nephew.

"This is my nephew. Exercise your power upon him."

"Aunt!" cried the Rev. Mr. Alan.

Miss Vesey laughed.

"Shall I?" she asked.

"You have my permission. You say you can do with men and women what you will. He will be a rich man one of these fine days. Make him marry you."

The curate's distress was piteous.

"Aunt! Have you any sense of shame?"

"Suppose I try," observed Miss Vesey, her face alive with laughter. "I'm sure I'm poor enough, and I'm already connected with the clergy."

"Aunt, I entreat you, come away. If you will not come then I must go alone. I cannot stay to see the church insulted."

Miss Macleod turned to Miss Vesey.

"Will you let him go?"

"Certainly not," laughed the young lady. "If only to pay him out for being so ungallant."

The Rev. Alan—literally—wrung his hands.

"This—this is intolerable. Aunt, it is impossible for me to stay. You—you'll find me there when you get home."

The Rev. Alan, in a state of quite indescribable confusion, turned toward the door. But before he could move a step Miss Vesey struck a chord on the piano.

"Stay!" she said.

The curate seemed to hesitate for a moment, then turned to her again. He seemed to be under the impression that he owed an apology to the pianist. "I—I must apologize—for my seeming rudeness. I know that my—my aunt only meant what she said as—as a joke; but—at the same time my respect for my sacred office"—at this point the little man drew himself up—"compels me, after what has passed, to go."

Miss Vesey struck a second chord.

"Stay!" she said again.

Before the agitated believer in the propriety of the unmarried state for clergymen could say her yea or nay, she cast her spells—and her hands—upon the keyboard of the instrument, so that it burst out into a concourse of sweet sounds. The Rev. Alan was, in his way, a born musician. The only dissipation he allowed himself was music. The soul of the mean-looking, wrong-

headed little man was attuned to harmony. Good music had on him the effect which Orpheus with his lute had on more stubborn materials than curates—it bewitched him. Miss Vesey had not played ten seconds before he realized that here was a dispenser of the food that his soul loved—a mistress of melody. What it was she played he did not know—it seemed to him an improvisation. He stood listening—entranced. Suddenly the musician's mood changed. The notes of triumph ceased, and there came instead a strain of languorous music which set all the curate's pulses throbbing.

"Come here!" Miss Vesey whispered. The curate settled his spectacles upon his nose. He looked around him as though he were not sure that he had heard aright. And the command was uttered in such half-tones that he might be excused for supposing that his ears had played him false.

"Come here!"

The command again. Again the Rev. Alan settled his spectacles upon his nose. He gazed at the musician as if still in doubt.

"I—I beg your pardon. Did you speak to me?".

"Come here!"

A third time the command—this time clearer and louder, too. As if unconsciously he advanced toward the pianist, hat in one hand, handkerchief in the other, his whole bearing eloquent of a state of mental indecision. He went quite close to her—so close that there would be no excuse for saying that he could not hear her if she whispered again.

Again the musician's theme was changed. The languorous melody faded. There came a succession of wild sounds, as of souls in pain. The curate's organization was a sensitive one—the cries were almost more than he could bear.

"Pity me!"

The voice was corporeal enough. It was Miss Vesey, once more indulging in a whisper. Again the curate was at a nonplus. Again he went through the mechanical actions of setting his spectacles upon his nose.

"I—I beg your pardon?" It seemed to be a stereotyped form of words with him.

"Pity me! Pity me! Do!"

The words were a cry of anguish—quite as anguishing as the music was. The Rev. Alan looked round the room, perhaps for succor and relief. He saw his aunt, but at that moment her face happened to be turned another way.

"If you need my pity it is yours."

The words, like the lady's, were spoken, doubtless unintentionally, in a whisper.

"If you pity me, then help me, too."

"If I can, I—I will!"

"You promise?"

"Certainly."

Although the word was a tolerably bold one, it was by no means boldly spoken; probably that was owing to the state of confusion existing in the speaker's mind.

The theme was changed again. The piano ceased to wail. A tumult of sound came from it which was positively deafening. The effect was most bewildering, especially as it concerned the Rev. Alan. For in the midst of all the tumult he was conscious of these words being addressed to him by Miss Vesey:

"Help me with your love!"

The instant the words were spoken the tumult died away, there was the languorous strain again. The curate was speechless, which, all things considered, was perhaps excusable. An idea was taking root in his brain that the musician was mad, at least mad enough to be irresponsible for the words she used. If that were so, then, unlike the generality of lunatics, she had a curious aptitude for sticking to the point.

"Love me, or I die!"

"My—my dear young lady!" stammered the curate.

"You will be my murderer! If you do not marry me," continued this extraordinary young woman in tones which harrowed his heart—and yet which were not so harrowing as her music, by a very great deal—"I shall die before your eyes."

The Rev. Alan still had his hand to his head. He looked round him with bewildered, short-sighted eyes. Curiously enough, his aunt still had her face turned in the opposite direction.

"I—I'm sure——" he stammered.

"Of what?"

"I—I shall be happy——"

"Happy!"

The music ceased, and that for the sufficiently good reason that the pianist rose from her seat and flung her arms about the curate's neck. He said something, but what it was was lost in the ample expanses of Miss Vesey's breast.

"Madam," she cried, addressing Miss Macleod, "your nephew has promised to marry me! He has said that he will be happy!"

Miss Macleod, who did not happen just then to be looking in the opposite direction, smiled grimly. Owing to the peculiarity of her physical configuration everything about her was grim—even her smile.

"I am glad to hear it," she observed.

The Rev. Alan struggled free from the lady's powerful embrace. His distress was tragic in its intensity.

"This—this is some extraordinary——"

"Happiness!" cried the lady, and again she clasped him in her arms. "Your happiness is mine! It has been my life-long dream to be married to a clergyman; is not my father one already?"

At that moment the father referred to entered the room.

"What's this?" he cried, as a father naturally would cry on seeing his daughter with a stranger in her arms.

The young lady, however, promptly relieved his mind.

"Father, let me present you to my future husband."

"I—I do protest," screamed the frenzied curate.

"You do protest, sir! What do you protest?" The father's voice was terrible, so was his manner. Apparently his paternal instincts had not been destroyed by dipsomania. "You come to this house, sir, a perfect stranger, sir; you assault my daughter, sir; you take her in your arms."

This was, perhaps, strictly speaking, a perversion of the truth; but at this moment Miss Macleod offered her interposition.

"You need be under no concern. My nephew is a gentleman. I was a witness of his proposal. If he

behaves as a dastard to your daughter, I will deliver him to your righteous vengeance then. In the mean time, perhaps you and your daughter will accompany us home to luncheon. We can arrange the preliminaries of the marriage during the course of the meal."

III.

"Miss Bayley, I am in a position of the extremest difficulty."

Miss Bayley was not only the Rev. Alan Macleod's parishioner; she was, so to speak, his co-curate at Swaffham-on-Sea. His congregation not infrequently consisted of two—the verger and Miss Bayley.

The curate had returned to Swaffham, and it was this faithful feminine flower of his flock he was addressing now.

"Oh, Mr. Macleod, I am so sorry! Can I help you? Is it spiritual?"

The curate shook his head. He had not fallen quite so low as that. The idea of his coming to a person in petticoats for help in spiritual matters struck him as too absurd. He could scarcely excuse Miss Bayley.

"Can you think that I, your priest, should come to learn of you?"

Miss Bayley looked down.

"I was wrong," she murmured. She told herself she ought to have remembered that none of the curates ever was half so cock-sure about that kind of thing as the Rev. Alan. But then, she was so anxious to lend him a hand in anything.

"An error owned is half atoned."

He meant this for a little pleasantry—but he was an awkward man, even when he trifled. He hesitated. He was conscious that he had come for assistance in a matter quite as delicate as anything which appertained to church government.

"Miss Bayley." He cleared his throat. "I—I have an aunt." The abashed Miss Bayley signified that she had heard him mention that fact before, which she had about half a dozen times a day. "She is not one of us." Miss Bayley sighed; she felt that she was expected to sigh. "She is of the world, worldly. Her

thoughts are fixed on temporalities. Being possessed of great riches, to which I am the natural heir, the continual desire of her life is that I—I should marry."

The Rev. Mr. Alan stammered a little at the end. Miss Bayley perceptibly started. That was the continual desire of her life, too. She wondered if it was going to be gratified at last.

"That you should marry? Oh, Mr. Macleod!"

"I need not tell you that, in such a matter, her desire would not weigh with me in the least. The true priest is a celibate."

Miss Bayley's heart fluttered—she did not go with him so far as that.

"But—if she were to disinherit you?"

"Do you know me so little as that? Nothing would please me better than that she should."

He clasped his hands in a kind of ecstasy. The lady, whose father was the parish doctor, and who knew what it was to have to dress on nothing a year, was almost tempted to think that the curate was a fool. But as she could scarcely express the thought aloud, she was wise enough to hold her peace. The gentleman went on rather awkwardly. The travelling was getting difficult, in fact.

"To—eh—such lengths has—eh—she—she—allowed her desire to—eh—carry her, that—eh—it—it has resulted in—eh—involving me in—eh—complication of an excessively disagreeable kind."

Miss Bayley's imagination realized the worst at once.

"Are you engaged?" she cried.

"She—she says I am."

"She says you are!" The lady was on the verge of tears—the blow was sudden. "Mr. Macleod, I have something which I have to do upstairs."

She felt that if she stayed in the room she might disgrace herself by crying before his face. The Rev. Alan was dismayed at the idea of her leaving him.

"Miss Bayley, I do entreat you not to go. You do not understand me in the least. I do not say I am engaged; quite—quite the other way."

"Oh, Mr. Macleod!"

The affair might have its comic side for a looker-on,

but it was tragic enough for her. If she did not get this man, whom could she get? At Swaffham-on-Sea eligible bachelors were as rare as snow in summer. Besides—women attach themselves to poodle dogs—she really liked the man.

The curate continued:

"The—the circumstances really are, I think, the most extraordinary I ever heard of. I should be almost induced to believe that it all happened in a dream were it not for a letter that I have in my pocket."

"From whom is the letter?"

"From—from Miss Vesey."

"Is that the lady you are engaged to?"

"En—engaged to? I hadn't made her acquaintance ten minutes before she said I had proposed to her."

"She would not have said so unless you had."

"Miss Bayley, do you not know me better than that? Nothing was further from my mind! The proposal came from her."

"I have heard of women proposing to men! And I suppose you accepted her?" She was strongly tempted to add: "You are imbecile enough for anything!" But even in that hour of her trial she refrained.

"I can only assure you that I had no such intention in any words. I may have used—words which came from me unawares, owing to the state of confusion I was in on receiving such a proposition from a total stranger."

Miss Bayley turned away. She thought she saw exactly how it was.

"I can only offer you my congratulations. I do not know why you enter into all these details. When is the marriage to be?"

"Marriage!"

"Yes, marriage! I hope you will send me a piece of the cake. Oh, Mr. Macleod, I never thought that you would behave to me like this!"

Miss Bayley fairly succumbed. She buried her face in her hands and ran crying from the room. Mr. Macleod, left behind, was thunderstruck. He realized what any man, with even a little knowledge of the world, would have seen from the first.

"She loves me! What have I done?" He sank

in a chair and he, too, buried his face in his hands. Presently he rose again. "Poor, pure soul! She is the best woman in the world." He twisted his hands together with a nervousness which was peculiarly his. "I have done wrong in the sight of God and man!"

How he got out of the house he never knew; but he did get out, and through the front door, too. He set off walking toward the rectory, where, in the absence of the rector, he lived rent free. He had not gone twenty yards from the house when a gloved hand slapped him smartly on the shoulder.

"Alan!"

He turned. There was Miss Vesey and her father! He could hardly believe that it was, but it was. The lady was brilliantly attired, perhaps as a set-off to her father. That worthy gentleman resembled nothing so much as what, in former days, they would have called a broken-down hedge parson. He was evidently meant for a clergyman, sartorially. That is, the conception was clear enough, it was the result which was unsatisfactory.

"Your hand, my son!"

He held out his hand after the manner of the fathers in old comedy. But, unfortunately, he did not wait for the curate to give him his hand; he seized it and shook it up and down pump-handle fashion. And while the father was engaged in this edifying performance the daughter flung her arms about the curate's neck.

"My beloved!" she cried.

If there were any there to behold they beheld what they had never seen before—the curate embraced as a curate never had been embraced in public at Swaffham-on-Sea.

"Let me go!" he stammered.

And in due time the lady let him go. Under the circumstances he kept his presence of mind very well—for him.

"You—you'll find the rectory about a quarter of a mile in front of you, just round the bend in the road. If—if you'll excuse me, I have a most important visit I must make."

Miss Vesey's father slapped him heartily—too heart-

ily!—upon the back, again after the fashion of the comedy fathers.

"Don't put yourself out for us, my boy! Don't neglect your duties, as is too often the case with the young. Tell us where the bottles are, and we'll make ourselves snug till you come in."

The curate did not tell them where the bottles were; in fact, there was only a solitary bottle of cod-liver oil in the house, and probably the speaker's thoughts did not incline that way; but they went on to the rectory alone. Miss Vesey waved her parasol and kissed her glove to him so long as she was in sight. He stood watching them till they were round the bend in the road, then he re-entered the doctor's house.

This time he passed through the back door, straight into the kitchen. "Lauk, sir!" cried the maid-of-all-work: "who'd a thought of seeing you?"

The Rev. Alan addressed her in a fever of excitement.

"Tell Miss Ellen I must speak to her at once."

He went into the parlor and the maid-of-all-work went up-stairs. Presently she returned with a message.

"If you please, sir, Miss Ellen's compliments, and she's got a headache."

Mr. Macleod was pacing up and down the room, very much in the manner of the carnivora about feeding time at the Zoo.

"A headache!"

He took his note-book from his pocket. Tearing out a page he scribbled on it these two or three strongly worded lines:

"I entreat you to see me if you ever called yourself my friend. It is a matter of life or death—almost, I would venture to say, of heaven or hell. A. M."

The maid-of-all-work bore these winged words above. The result was presently visible in the form of the lady herself. She entered with the air of a martyr, conscious of her crown.

"You are my priest. I have come."

"It is not as a priest I have summoned you, Ellen, but as a friend."

The use of the Christian name was perhaps unin-

tentional, but the lady showed her sense of the familiarity at once.

"Sir!"

Her lip curled, possibly with scorn. His answer was sufficiently startling. "Ellen, I entreat you to be my wife."

"Your wife, Mr. Macleod! Are you mad?"

"I am—nearly. I shall be quite if you don't accede to my request at once."

"I think you are mad now. How dare you insult me when from my bed-room window I just saw you kissing that creature in the street."

"I kissed her! She kissed me."

"It's the same thing."

"It's not!" Which was true enough—it was a different thing entirely. "Ellen, can you not see that I was never more in earnest in my life? If you do not marry me, something tells me that that woman will, and for all I know that wretched parent of hers may be the occupant of a dissenting pulpit; he looks disreputable enough for anything. What with her and her father, and my aunt, I am as a reed in their hands. I do entreat you—be my wife."

The offer was not put in the most flattering form. Still it was an offer.

"If you really want me," began Miss Bayley.

"Want you! I want nothing so much in all the world."

"And if you think I can be of use to you in the parish——"

"Parish! It's not the parish I'm thinking of, it's—it's that wretched woman."

Miss Bayley did not like this way of putting it at all.

"I will consider what you say, Mr. Macleod, and will let you have an answer—say in a month."

"In a month!" The curate was aghast. "I want your answer now. Ellen, I do entreat you, if you do not want to see me disgraced in the face of all the world, promise to be my wife."

"But Mr. Macleod, you do not even pretend to care for me."

"Care for you! I care for you more than I ever cared for any woman yet."

"Then in that case"—the lady was a little coy—"it shall be just as you will."

At this point the ordinary lover would have taken her in his arms, and there would follow a number of crosses denoting what we have seen termed "osculatory concussions." But the Rev. Alan was not an ordinary lover at all. He continued his frenzied pacing round the room.

"It is not enough to promise to be my wife; you must be my wife."

"Mr. Macleod, what do you mean?"

"Miss Bayley—Ellen—those two persons are at the rectory, awaiting my arrival at this moment. She is a disreputable woman, he a ruffianly man. They are quite capable of coercing me into some dreadful entanglement from which I may find it impossible to release myself. My only hope lies in an immediate marriage."

"I do not understand you in the least."

"Then let me endeavor to make myself quite plain. I will not return to the rectory; you will put on your hat and jacket and come up at once with me to town. I will get a special license. And we will be married before any one has an inkling of what it is that we intend."

"Mr. Macleod, is it an elopement you propose?"

"Ellen, it is."

The little man was shaking like a leaf.

"I never heard of such a thing in my life."

"Nor did I dream that I should ever make such a proposition to a living woman, but needs must when the devil drives."

The lady began to cry.

"Alan, I must say you have not a flattering way of putting things."

"What avails flattery at such a moment as this? For heaven's sake, don't cry. I have heard you say yourself that you don't believe in long engagements."

"Yes, but when one has not been engaged five minutes!"

"What matters five minutes or five years when one has once resolved? It seems to me that when there is nothing to gain by waiting—but everything to lose—the sooner one marries the better."

There was something in this; she told herself that he was not such a nincompoop, after all, when he was driven to bay—poor, dear little man! Amidst her tears she thought of other things. A regular marriage would involve a trousseau. She was quite sure that she should get no money out of her father for that—for the best of reasons, he had none to give. And then she knew her curate. She thought it quite possible that if that other woman—the brazen hussy! —did once get him in her hands he might at any rate be lost to her. Better a good deal this unseemly haste than to run the risk of such an end to all her hopes as that!

The end of it was that the Rev. Alan Macleod and Miss Bayley went up together by the next train which left the neighboring station—eight miles off—for town.

IV.

Shortly after his marriage Alan Macleod received the following curious letter from his aunt:

"NEPHEW ALAN: Don't talk fiddlesticks about giving up the church because you're married, though I never could understand why you ever became a parson, unless it was because your father was the devil's own.

"I meant all along that you should marry the doctor's daughter. Of course, as a Macleod of Pittenquhair, you might have had the best in the land, but then—what a Macleod you are! Have you ever heard of the Irishman's pig? They pull him by the tail when they want him to follow his snout. That is what I have done with you. I heard all about the girl and about your philanderings together, and how you thought it was the church she worshipped, when the curate was the object of her adoration. Don't you ever believe about single young women worshipping the church when there's a bachelor inside it! I heard she was a decent body, so I said that, sooner than leave you, the last of the Macleods of Pittenquhair, a barren stock, the girl should have you.

"The thing was how—with you and your 'celibate priest' stuff and nonsense. But Providence helps those who help themselves, so 'Miss Vesey' tumbled from the skies.

"I saw her first at a thought-reading séance. She

did some very funny things, and she plays the piano like an angel. She certainly had a gift that way, for, with the aid of her music, she played all sorts of tricks on the fools who were there. I thought to myself, what tricks she might play on you if you came within her range! Then all of a sudden the whole thing was hatched in my brain. I made her acquaintance. I took her home to supper. Afterward, inspired by the largest quantity of champagne I ever saw a woman drink, she told me all about herself. She was the most candid young woman I ever met.

"She was married—to an unfrocked parson. But, according to her own account, she was more than his match. A perfect limb! And as clever as she was wicked—one of those wicked women who are born, not made, for she was not yet twenty-one. I told her all about you. I said that if, through her, you married the doctor's daughter at Swaffham-on-Sea, she should have £500 upon your wedding-day. She came into the scheme at once. So we arranged it all together.

"Among other things, her husband was one of those scamps who pose in the advertisements sheets as distressed clergymen whose large families depend for sustenance on their being able to dispose of some article or other at one-third of its cost price. Just then his line was apostle spoons—which he bought for five shillings and sold for twenty. I was to summon you up to town. I was to bully you about your marriage. And then, when I had thoroughly upset you—which I explained to her it was the easiest thing in the world to do—I was to call your attention to his advertisment of the apostle spoons. I was to march you off then and there to buy them. When I got you into her house I was to leave the rest to her.

"She was to pose as her husband's daughter, which she was young enough to be—in years, at any rate. She said that if I brought you to her in a state of agitation and confusion bordering on imbecility—which I undertook to do—and if you were the sort of man I had described to her, within half an hour she would induce you to use language which might be construed into an offer of marriage. Then, with her husband's aid, she would so drive you to distraction as to send you flying into Miss Bayley's arms as into a harbor of refuge.

"I need not describe to you how she succeeded—though we had neither of us bargained that you would be quite the fool you were. When I heard of your

eloping with the doctor's daughter, the instant 'Miss Vesey' put in an appearance on the scene, I owned that I had at last attained to one article of faith—an implicit belief in the infinite capacity for folly to be found in the human animal in trousers.

"It is unnecessary, under these circumstances, to say that I congratulate you upon your marriage. I hope that your wife will be a sensible woman and present you, without loss of time, with a son—or, better still, with half a dozen—so that I may have an opportunity of finding at least one among them who shall not be quite such a fool as his father. Your affectionate aunt, Janet Macleod (of Pittenquhair)."

When Miss Macleod's nephew had finished reading this letter he wiped the perspiration from his brow. Then he wiped his glasses. Then he set to thinking, not too pleasantly. Such a letter was a bitter pill to swallow. Then, not desirous that his aunt's epistle should be read by his wife, he tore it into strips and burned them one by one. He told himself that he would never forgive his aunt—never!—and that, willingly, he would never look upon her face again.

But so to resolve was only to add another to his list of follies. Within twenty-four hours of his marriage, fortunately for him, his wife had proved that the gray mare was once more the better horse. Now she had got her man, at last the strong vein of common-sense that was in her came to the front. When Miss Macleod came to see her she received her with open arms, and, as a matter of course, where she led her husband followed.

To one thing Alan has been constant—to the doctrine of the "celibate priest." According to him, a "priest" married was not a "priest" at all. Immediately after his marriage, therefore, nobody offering the least objection he quitted the "priesthood." He is now a gentleman of leisure. Probably with a view of providing him with some occupation his wife bids fair to come up to his aunt's standard of a sensible woman and to present him with half a dozen sons.

There is, therefore, no fear of the Macleods of Pittenquhair becoming—like certain volcanoes—extinct, at least in the present generation.